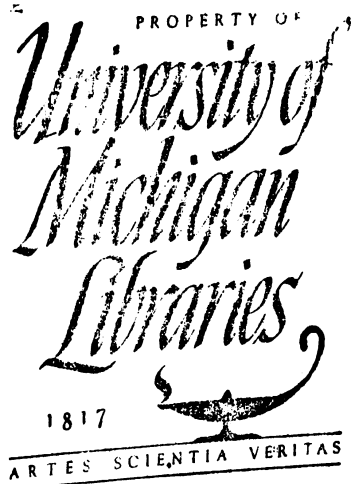


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EXPERIENCES WITH MEDIUMS

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By

J. ARTHUR HILL

AUTHOR OF "PSYCHICAL SCIENCE AND RELIGIOUS
BELIEF," "LETTERS FROM SIR OLIVER LODGE," ETC.

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PREFACE

DURING the last twenty-five years I have sat with many mediums in different parts of the country, mostly without success. Some of these mediums were professional, some private individuals who were acquaintances or friends. I think that real mediumship is much more rare than is supposed in some quarters, though I do not question the honesty of those who think they possess these curious powers ; some of them are people of exceptionally vivid imagination, and they regard as objective what is perhaps only the outcome of their own subliminal mental levels. But I have met several real mediums. In particular I have had the good fortune to have regular sittings with one man of extraordinary powers, over a period of many years ; altogether, my friends and I had sittings with him for twenty years. My reports were made in shorthand, verbatim, and I took down not only all that the medium said, but also all that the sitters said, so that I

could be sure as to how much information, if any, had been given away. I typed out these notes either the same day or the day after, adding annotations. These sheets were filed and indexed, with many cross-references, so that they could be studied from time to time, in order to decide what hypothesis was most reasonable as explanation.

In my earlier books I have given much evidence which came through concerning my own relatives and friends. But most of this matter was known to me, and may be thought by critics to be explainable by telepathy from me. So I have selected from my material a number of cases which seem to require some other hypothesis, and these I present in the following pages. Some have appeared in print before, in various places, but all have been revised and in many cases rearranged and re-written. I wished to put together a representative collection of cases drawn from the phenomena of one medium, obtained over a period of nearly twenty years. In this I think the present book is perhaps unique, for not many records of investigation cover so long a stretch of time.

Perhaps I ought to add that the fact of selection does not weaken the evidential

weight of the communications. I have not selected true things out of a mass of true and false. With this medium there was practically nothing that was incorrect or unrecognised. If he got anything at all, it was evidential. If he got no impressions, he would say so, and the sitting was merely a blank. But he generally got something, though the amount of evidence varied. My point is that he did not reel off strings of names and descriptions, some recognised and some not, the difficulty then being to decide how much ought to be allowed for chance coincidence. If he got anything, it was evidential. Consequently a selection does not make the evidence seem stronger than it was. On the contrary, a study of the whole mass of matter is more impressive than a selection ; for the evidence is cumulative.

J. A. H.

Claremont,

THORNTON, BRADFORD.

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Experiences with Mediums

CHAPTER I

PREJUDICES

WHEN we take up a book on any debatable subject we want to know something about the writer's bias, in order to decide how much to discount his conclusions. If the writer claims to be impartial, we suspect not only bias but also either dishonesty or ignorance of his own psychology. The late Professor William James, in his book entitled *Talks to Teachers*, says that we begin to be old fogies, with settled opinions, at about twenty-five. Our minds have got stocked with facts and ideas and desires, and they have become less ready to accept anything new. A new idea will be hospitably received only if it has friends or relatives

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already inside. We must know something that the new fact can be hooked on to ; or, to vary the metaphor, our mental furniture must be of such a kind that the new fact will fit in harmoniously with the existing collection. Accordingly, I think it is only fair to tell the reader, as truthfully as I can, something about my own mental background as it was when I became acquainted with psychical things.

This acquaintanceship began at a time when, according to Professor James, I was far advanced in fageyism, for I was thirty-three. And I can testify, from my own experience, to the truth of all that he says about the difficulty of giving hospitality to ideas which have no friends within the citadel. I had had an average sort of education, with religious teaching of a narrow but sincere kind, such as the average Nonconformist pulpit of that day supplied, and in my teens I was an omnivorous reader. I became interested in science, and circumstances required me to specialise in chemistry. From this I branched out into physics, astronomy, and biology, though in an elementary way. I read Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and their brethren, with Herbert Spencer on the

philosophy side, and the result can easily be guessed. But I did not become a materialist, for I had read Berkeley, and knew that no amount of biology and "concomitance of mental phenomena with brain structure" could furnish an ultimate explanation of the mind. Also I had steeped myself in Carlyle and Emerson. I suppose I was a sort of pantheist.

But such labels are never quite satisfactory, and pantheism has been called a polite form of atheism, so I am not enamoured of the word. Perhaps it would be better to say that I was a philosophic idealist with no strong convictions and with a keen interest in science. The names of Huxley and Emerson will give a good idea of where I stood. If Sir James Jeans had been writing then, I should have been one of his admirers, as I am now.

But all this was a matter of intellectual opinion. It was an affair of the reason, which in my case had been awakened to activity by the challenge of orthodox theology. I had begun to think for myself, and had put aside the old ways of looking at the world and life. It seemed to me that the churches had not yet become aware of Copernicus, not to mention Darwin. As to immortality, the

arguments of theology were not very satisfactory, and, on the other hand, science could not disprove it, though the work of the biologists did seem to render the idea of survival somewhat difficult to accept.

But all this was on the side of reason. My reasoned convictions, such as they were, could not be called vigorous. I was agnostic ; I did not know. On the emotional side I was in similar case. I had no strong desire for individual survival of bodily death. I had had a rather unpleasant time for the preceding ten years, having been an invalid all the time. I did not desire a continuation of the same kind of life. I agree that I felt so much in debt to those who had looked after me, that I wanted to repay them if such a thing were possible. It did not seem likely to be possible in this life, and accordingly I did feel that I should like a future life in which to repay obligations. But I did not wish it on my own account. Further, I had suffered no recent bereavement. My mother had died when I was fourteen, and my father when I was twenty-six. I think I had an average filial affection for both, and they were the best of parents. I felt that I should like to rejoin them, but the feeling was not

poignant as in the case of recent bereavement. I thought I should like to tell them that I wished I had been a better son to them, but there was no serious reason for remorse ; it was only a natural regret about one's failings ; so the feeling was not keen. Thus it will be seen that I had little or no emotional bias towards belief in survival.

Both intellectually and emotionally, then, I was not strongly prejudiced. I know that one's state of mind varies somewhat ; a friend used to tell me that all healthy human beings desire survival, and that my indifference was entirely a matter of ill-health. It may be so ; certainly in times of physical distress I had often wished for cessation of personal consciousness. This perhaps balances the times when I mildly desired survival, for the reasons already mentioned. On the whole, although there were small variations of mood, my general feeling was one of indifference. If human personality ceased with death, I was well content, so far as I myself was concerned.

That is as true an account as I can give of my state of mind when, at the age of thirty-three, I began to be interested in psychical science.

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There is, of course, an impersonal side. If there is no survival of human personality, how can we think of existence as a reasonable affair? If there is a great Mind behind the veil of phenomena, and if that Mind is good, how can we reconcile it with the injustices of the present life? There is suffering which seems undeserved; if there is no future life, the Universe is not just, according to our standards. I agree that this is so. But, on the other hand, our standards may be wrong. Our knowledge is small. That Mind's thoughts may be not at all the same as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways. That was seen by the prophets of old. True, the world seems so orderly and comprehensible that we are justified in inferring the likeness of that Mind to ours, so perhaps we are justified in thinking of it as good in our sense of the word, and in that case we must assume survival in order to save the justice of the Mind. Well, all this is reasonable argument, but it can prove nothing. It depends too much on presuppositions. So I left it at that. I did not know, and I did not greatly care.

CHAPTER II

BEGINNING OF INVESTIGATION

SUCH was my state of mind at the age of thirty-three. For some years I had been more or less of an invalid, with a heart weakness brought on by over-cycling and athletics, and had written articles for the Rationalist press. In those years of enforced idleness as regards business—I had been destined for partnership in a cloth-manufacturing business of which my elder brother was the head—I had read widely in science and philosophy, though in a rather haphazard way. The Rationalists seemed to me to be too dogmatic, but I was with them in some things, so I wrote occasionally for the *Rationalist Review* and other similar publications. From this, and from what I have said in the preceding chapter, it will be seen that my prejudices, if any, were not in the direction of religion ; or, shall I say, not in the direction of the religion presented by the orthodox theology of those days.

I am not sure that I can say that I was open-minded. I suppose I thought I was, but I think I probably scoffed at such things as spiritualism. I regarded miracles as myths, and had a certain contempt for the superstitions of a pre-scientific age. Well, I was young and ignorant. Some of the superstitions have turned out to be true, and I confess my sin with proper humility.

I doubt whether I should have been persuaded to take psychical things seriously if it had not happened that they touched me rather personally. Friends told me of a medical medium, who went into trance and whose controls—purporting to be deceased doctors—diagnosed and prescribed. If patients were unable to go in person, a relative could go instead, taking a snipping of the patient's hair or some object which had been in contact with him, such as a tie or pocket-book or handkerchief. I regarded these narratives as examples of the surprising continuance of superstition, and listened to them with polite superiority. But as time went on I heard so many of these stories, about the same medium, that I began to take notice, particularly when a sceptical neighbour told me of the experience which his

family had had. I tried the medium, by proxy, and was puzzled by the correctness of the diagnosis. Or rather by its apparent correctness ; for it echoed what the doctors had said about my heart, but did not find the root of the trouble, which was afterwards found to be in some abscessed teeth. I took the prescribed herbal decoctions, which did not cure me, but they did no harm ; perhaps they did a little good.

This experience interested me. And it was not an affair of one sitting. My sister went on my account, many times, over a period of two or three years, and certainly the medium or her controls showed knowledge of me which I could not account for. I do not know whether the controls were spirits or not. I made no attempt to establish their identity, for they mostly purported to be foreign, and even if such men really had existed, the medium might have read up about them, so nothing was provable. Still, how did she know about my physical state ? Perhaps it was telepathy from the sitter, or from me ; but on the other hand I was told of cases, by friends whose accuracy I could trust, in which an entirely unthought-of diagnosis was made, which turned out correct.

So telepathy from any living person seemed to be excluded. I was puzzled.

So I began to read up Spiritualism, by borrowing books from the London Spiritualist Alliance. I read probably a thousand volumes or more, and made notes concerning about five hundred. Some of them were impressive, for instance, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, by Sir William Crookes, for whom I had a great admiration, having worked from his books in my chemistry days. Other accounts were so wonderful as to be incredible. Then I read the back numbers of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, and was still more impressed. Here were accounts by people with reputations to lose, as indeed was the case with Crookes; men of science, with distinguished careers, such as Sir Oliver Lodge. There were accounts by literary men of genius, such as F. W. H. Myers and Andrew Lang. Some of the leading members were doctors or lawyers, men accustomed to mental aberration and to the estimation of evidence. I was particularly struck with the report on Mrs. Piper by Dr. Richard Hodgson in Vol. XIII. In the well-known G.P. series, he introduced about a hundred and

twenty sitters, all anonymously ; thirty of them had been known to G. P.—George Pelham—in life, while the others had been strangers to him. The G. P. communicator recognised twenty-nine out of the thirty, greeting them by name and with the appropriate degree of familiarity. The thirtieth was a young lady whom he had known as a girl, and she had of course altered a good deal. He never claimed to know any of the ninety sitters whom as a matter of fact he had not known in life. This was not the whole of the evidence, but it was a striking part of it. I felt that if I were a logical creature, I should be convinced. But I was not. No amount of reading will quite convince a mind that has become set in a materialist philosophy or something like it.

Then I heard of Aaron Wilkinson, a clairvoyant, who lived near Halifax. An acquaintance of mine told me the most marvellous things about this medium's powers ; said he would come into the room of a perfect stranger, and reel off the names of the sitter's deceased relatives and friends, who would purport to be present. I did not believe this ; in fact, I was much amused. But presently it happened that two friends of

mine, both cautious and sceptical men, had a sitting with Wilkinson, taking notes and sending me an annotated report. This certainly astonished me, as indeed the results had astonished my friends. The medium showed knowledge of their affairs which he could hardly have possessed normally. So I wrote asking him if he would come over and see me, for a chat about these subjects in which I had become interested. I was invalided and confined to the house, so I could not visit him. He was kind enough to come, though stipulating that it should be considered a friendly call, not a sitting. His custom was, and continued to be, all his life, different from that of the mediums in London. He never sat with individual sitters, for a fee. He regarded himself as a speaker and clairvoyant for Spiritualist societies, and was in great request for this kind of work, travelling all over the country from Kent to South Wales, from Devon to Aberdeen. He was usually given hospitality by some local Spiritualist, and was thus to some extent in the hands of his host, who often persuaded him to give a group sitting to a few friends, for which he received a small sum ; I think each sitter usually paid a

shilling or two. But he did not encourage that kind of thing. He thought that his work lay on the platform.. He said that if he gave private sittings he would feel upset if he happened to have no clairvoyance. He said that with a fairly large audience he could always see spirit forms with someone, but that in a private sitting with one person he was not sure of seeing anything. However, he would come to me, for a chat, since I was an invalid and could not get about. I may here remark that Wilkinson at this time was about thirty ; he had seen these spirit forms from childhood, but had been punished for romancing when he told his parents, so he learned to keep quiet about them. Eventually he became acquainted with some Spiritualists, and he developed his powers. Now to describe this first visit to me.

On August 8, 1907, Wilkinson came over to see me. After casual conversation, I asked him to tell me if he saw anything psychical. He took up a book and ran the leaves between his fingers, seeming to be ungearing himself from the surroundings, so to speak. In a few minutes he looked up, apparently at some point over my right shoulder, and said :

"There is a spirit lady with you ; died at the age of fifty-four ; been dead twenty-one years. Medium size, placid, bright eyes, slight colour in cheeks, neat hair, wavy. Name, Mary. Interested in your welfare ; been with you since passing away. Was business-like and shrewd, a good manager. Has helped you during your illness."

A little later, the medium continued :

"You have not lived here long. You were not here when your mother died. She indicates unfamiliarity with this house."

Turning to my sister, he said :

"You had trouble nine years ago ; change in your life." (My father died in October, 1898, that is, nine years before, as said.) "You have lived here some little time." (Ten years.) "House is saturated with your influence, but you did not come to it new ; someone lived here before you." (True.)

The medium also got a little automatic writing, which was as under :

"Round Roundfield Place. Yes. Mary."

Now for my comments. All the facts given were correct, except that my mother, as we remember her, was pale, and we do not think that her hair was wavy. She died in November, 1886, aged fifty-four. We

then lived at Roundfield Place, which we left in 1897. I did not get up to look at the automatic writing until it was finished, so that I should not give any indication of its rightness or wrongness. After the first few words, Wilkinson said : " That will be the name of a house, I suppose," and the " Yes " was written in reply to his remark. I think that if my mother was really communicating and wishful to prove her identity, the thing most likely to occur to her would be the name Roundfield Place.

All this was very interesting and surprising. But we are bound to exhaust normal causation before invoking new causes, and I wondered whether the medium could have primed himself by inquiry. Many of the facts could have been got from a tombstone, but it was in a private cemetery at some distance. Moreover there was no mention of my father's name, which could have been similarly obtained. I was impressed, but not convinced. So I left it that. The medium would accept no money, so the motive was not financial. He impressed me favourably, and I wanted to have further sittings with him. This, however, was not possible at once, the state of my health becoming worse.

I ought to add that I have not quoted quite all that was said by the medium, because some of the matter concerned a deceased relative who had living relatives who might object to publicity. I admit, in fairness to the medium, that some of this matter could not have been obtained from tombstones, and that it was difficult to believe that it had been obtained by inquiry. But it was also difficult—for me at any rate—to believe in either telepathy or discarnate agency.

I have no reason to believe that the medium did make any inquiry or search for information about my deceased relatives ; my supposition of such an explanation was only the natural guess of a sceptical mind confronted with new phenomena which were not explicable by normal causes unless we invoke fraud. It must be understood that I had no evidence of fraud. I had no reason to believe that Wilkinson had ever been in that cemetery, or that he even knew of its existence.

CHAPTER III

R. P. LEATHER MEETS HIS FRIEND : ALSO THE SIDNEY CASE¹

ILLNESS prevented me from having regular sittings for some time after the experiences just described, but I kept in touch with Wilkinson in an indirect way. Friends of mine were able to have him occasionally at their homes, and they took careful notes which they kindly sent to me. They often introduced people from other and distant towns, without names, and almost always there was matter of a supernormal kind ; deceased friends of the unknown people, as well as relatives of my friends, would purport to be present, correctly giving their names and other identifying details. All the sitters were convinced that some supernormal agency was at work. My

¹ I have to thank Messrs. Cassell and Co., Ltd., for kind permission to quote this case and one other from my *Psychical Investigations*, now out of print.

friends began as sceptics—in fact they were vigorous Rationalists—but they were driven by the facts to accept a spiritistic explanation. Many facts were given which could not be explained even by telepathy from the sitters, and the idea of telepathy from distant people unknown to the medium seemed rather far-fetched and unacceptable.

I was, of course, anxious to have further experience, and in 1915 and onward I was able to resume. At first my own deceased relatives were the chief communicators, particularly my parents and grandparents on my mother's side. It is rather noteworthy that I never had any mention of my father's parents; I do not know why. Obviously it would have been easier for an impostor to obtain information about these, than information about my mother's people. But, quite apart from this, the evidence soon drove me from the supposition of fraud, for a great deal of evidential matter was given which could not reasonably be supposed to have been obtained by inquiry. I have described some of this evidence in full, in my book *Psychical Investigations*, which is now out of print. In that book I quoted twelve sittings in full—consecutive sittings—

so that the reader could see that I was not selecting good bits and suppressing things which did not fit or were unverifiable. But the full reports were tedious reading ; and moreover there was never much that was wrong or unverifiable, so this full reporting is hardly necessary. I propose, therefore, to give in this volume some selected cases. The same person was often present in many sittings of different dates.

This case of Mr. Leather is included in the earlier volume just mentioned, but it is mixed up with others, the sittings being reported verbatim, and was accordingly difficult to separate and hold clear in the mind. In what follows I dissect out the matter referring to this particular man. The distance of time does not affect the evidential quality of the matter, for I now quote from the original records, as before, and nothing depends on memory. The words quoted as being said by the medium are his exact words as taken down at the time.

July 21, 1914.

“ I get the name Dunlop, a doctor, medical doctor, old times. I get the name Leather. I feel that he would be an old man, very

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gentlemanly, rather retiring. I hesitate to say the name, for I never heard it before as a name. It only means boots, leggings, etc., to me."

The meaning of this was quite plain to me. I knew Dunlop House, which formerly had been occupied by a Dr. Dunlop, who, however, was before my time. I used to go there occasionally, the later occupant being a friend of mine, and a Mr. Leather was generally there when I called, being another friend of the occupier. Mr. Leather was an elderly man, even then, and had a rather *grand seigneur* manner. He was much older than I, and was in fact a friend of my father's rather than a friend of mine. He died in 1909.

The next incident occurred a few months later, when I received (November 19, 1914) a letter from Wilkinson, who happened to be at Bournemouth, whither a letter of mine, asking him to come over, had followed him. After answering this, and describing his journeyings, he said :

"By the way, did you ever know someone named Parberry, or some such name? I am impressed that it would be a very old gentleman you might have known. However, I get

the feeling, while I am holding your letter. He was a man who retained his faculties in a large measure to the end of life almost, I am not sure, but I feel that perhaps he was called Robert, but of that I could not be too sure. The other name, however, being so uncommon, I thought I would tell it you. He evidently is keenly interested in you."

The full name of Mr. Leather was Robert Parberry Leather, though at the time of receiving the letter I was uncertain about the second name. It turned out on inquiry that it was Parberry.

I wrote to Wilkinson, saying that the name Robert Parberry had interesting significance, and that I should like him to come over for a sitting as soon as possible. I gave him no further information. On December 14, 1914, he came for a sitting, and I said in preliminary conversation that the Parberry of his letter had meaning; whereupon he remarked that when writing the letter he had felt that the gentleman in question was waiting for some old friend to pass over. This, as it happens, was curiously true. At the time when that letter was written, Mr. Leather's brother-in-law and most intimate

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friend was dying, not far from Mr. Leather's old home, and three hundred miles from where Wilkinson then was. Presumably space is less of an obstacle to those over there ; and while waiting about in the old earth regions or conditions, Mr. Leather could give his message to the medium at Bournemouth as easily as if the latter had been here, near the dying friend. I told Wilkinson in reply to his remark, that it was quite correct ; an old friend of Mr. Leather's having died, after gradually sinking for many months, on November 29, 1914, ten days after the writing of the letter.

January 15, 1915.

“ There is a man by that bookcase, a very old man, big, full-featured, been gone some time, old-fashioned shirt, white, very clean. Elias Sidney.” (Medium took pencil and paper, and wrote “ Elias Sidney.”) “ Politics interested him. Rather a strong politician. Radical or strong Liberal. Been dead some time. Somebody brought him, somebody on the other side, who has manifested here before. Not lived here. Good colour in his face. There is somebody behind him, and he shadows him. Had to do with Liberals.

Rather heavy on his feet. . . . Sidney got excited when discussing politics. You remember me seeing an old man when here before? I cannot remember his name."

(Noticing that he seemed eager and excited, as if something important was coming, I said "Mr. Leather, perhaps?" and he said: "Yes, it is Mr. Leather, who has brought Elias Sidney; they were cronies." Medium laughs, and repeats "They were cronies.") "Sidney has been passed away longer than Mr. Leather."

This was puzzling. I had never heard of any Elias Sidney. I made inquiries of Mr. Leather's friends in our village, but could glean nothing. After some months, however, during which I almost gave up hope, I found that Mr. Leather had had a friend named Elias Sidney, whom he met almost daily at a club in Bradford—a Liberal club. I found that the description was correct.

The importance of this incident is that it seems to rule out telepathy from my mind, for I am sure that I had never heard the name of Elias Sidney. It would seem that my old friend Mr. Leather brought him with the intention of disproving the telepathic explanation.

January 19, 1916.

“Have you a friend called Drayton? There is a very old man—he has a job to stand up. Tottering with age.” (On first coming back into earth conditions, a spirit frequently shows itself in the bodily state which existed just before its departure; partly perhaps for identification’s sake, but partly no doubt spontaneously, somewhat as we tend to revert to the manner and speech and subjects of old times when revisiting the home of our childhood.) “There are two old men together. Little, bent with age, white fronts; brothers or friends. Henry and Robert. Don’t know whether they were brothers or not. Henry is older than the other. They knew each other very well. Robert’s face is smoother, not so lined. Robert pre-deceased the other. I don’t think Henry has been long gone. He liked his own way; a bit dogmatic. Robert was rather milder. Henry had a lot of his own way. He is very much surprised about things now. . . . Robert was a nice old man; jolly. They had lots in common, though there was great difference. Perhaps difference in position. They are alike now in that respect.”

All the above was correct. Henry Drayton was the brother-in-law and friend whom Robert Parberry Leather had come to meet. The descriptions and characterisations are extremely apt ; more so than I can make clear to anyone who did not know the men.

Mr. Sidney died in January, 1909, aged eighty-three. Mr. Leather died seven weeks later, aged eighty-four. Mr. Drayton died in November, 1914, aged eighty-nine. I have no reason to believe that Wilkinson had ever heard of any of these men. I had never mentioned any of them to him ; indeed, as already stated, I had never heard of Mr. Sidney until he was mentioned in the medium's clairvoyance. The personal descriptions were extraordinarily accurate—I obtained a photograph of Mr. Sidney, and interviewed people who had known him—so the facts were not such as could have been obtained from printed matter or from tombstones.

CHAPTER IV

FURTHER "MEETING" CASES

IN the sitting on December 14, 1914, Wilkinson suddenly said, amid other matter :

"Have you known somebody called Walker? . . . At some time or other you had acquaintances called Walker."

He seemed, however, uncertain about the last syllable, so in order to help I suggested that it might be Walkley. He agreed, saying that he had never heard the name before, but had known some Walkers. This "helping" on my part may be seized on by sceptics, and indeed it is unwise to do much of it, for if we give away information we are spoiling our chances of getting evidence. But it sometimes happens, particularly if the medium is half right and apparently rather puzzled, that a little guidance leads to a further rush of evidential matter, without much real information having been conveyed;

and so long as everything "given away" is carefully noted down, there is no danger of the guidance vitiating the evidence, for we can make our own estimate of the amount to be allowed as discount, so to speak, on any true matter that may follow. In this case, however, my hint seemed useless. Nothing further came, though I expected something ; for I had known some Walkleys very well between 1883 and 1900, and I immediately thought of them when the medium said "Walker."

The next relevant incident occurred ten months later. In a letter dated "Bournemouth, October 1, 1915," Wilkinson said :

"Just when closing this epistle I felt as if some old man touched me, rather a gentleman, and he made me feel a bit like a parson. I cannot get any communication from him beyond 'A.S.W.,' whatever that means ; an impression I get is that you might have known this man some years ago."

The facts are that Mr. Walkley was a minister, that he was certainly a gentleman (more markedly so than the average village Nonconformist minister of those days), and that his full initials were A. S. W. I told the medium nothing except that what he had

written was correct for someone I had known.

At my next sitting there was no mention of the Walkleys, but at a later one, on February 17, 1916, the medium said, after other evidential matter :

“ You may hear of a funeral of somebody soon : I see a funeral party. A woman who will die soon : it is nearly up to you. Somebody old. There is a man here with a round soft hat, a felt hat, like a parson’s : grey : been a parson. He is about here waiting for somebody. . . . That old woman will die soon.” (Here I remarked : “ She is dead already.”) “ Indeed ? It is somebody very old and feeble—over eighty ; been going gradually.”

Our friends the Walkleys left this district in August, 1900. Mr. Walkley, minister at the Chapel I attended during his seventeen years’ pastorate, died three months later (November 16). He usually wore a clerical round, soft, felt hat, though occasionally a tall silk one ; and he had grey hair and beard. His widow afterwards lived mostly in London, but was sometimes in these parts (West Riding of Yorkshire), staying with relatives. Two days before this sitting—

i.e. on February 15—she had died there, at the age of eighty-two, after sinking gradually. The funeral was fixed for the 18th—i.e. the day after the sitting. Apparently her husband had come to meet her, and was still in these regions although she was now dead ; the reason no doubt being that the "departed" spirit often does not depart at once to supernal realms, but lingers about with those it loves, or is perhaps occupied for some little time in withdrawing from its old associations before setting its face to further progress in the larger life.

As to the possibility of the medium's possessing normal knowledge of her death or her connexion with us, or indeed of her existence, I think it is in the last degree unlikely. She was known to very few people ; her relatives were in no way prominent, and she died at a place about ten miles from Wilkinson's home, in another town. She had no friends in his neighbourhood, and I think it practically certain that he knew no one who knew her or her people, except myself ; and I had never told him anything about either her or them.

A small—but still rather noteworthy sequel to these events may also be quoted. At a sitting on December 4, 1925, the medium

asked my sister whether she had been to a funeral lately. He said, further, that someone was present who had been before, a minister, who had tried to help the person who had just gone over. Also that the funeral must have been within the last few days. The fact was that my sister had been to the funeral of old Mr. Walkley's son. This was on the day before the sitting. It would seem that the old minister had come to meet his son, as he had been to meet the old lady his widow, in February, 1916.

There was rather similar matter, referring to someone else, in the sitting quoted above, of February 17, 1916. After some very evidential things relating to my father, the medium said :

"This big man with the full face" (my father) "must have known a man named Charlton, a younger man. This man is just waking up. He didn't quite believe he was dead. I feel that he would be an impulsive man. He would swear when things went wrong. Hot-headed. Middle life. A proud man. He has been wandering about a while. Been gone some time.

"His influence is very authoritative. Almost an arrogant man in some ways.

There's somebody in the body that he wants to approach—a woman. His object is to reach her.

"He had money. He has not manifested here before. He was one who would rush through fire and water to get at what he wanted." (After interluded matter relating to other people, he continued): "That Charlton's influence won't leave me. He knew somebody called William. It is a bit fragmentary, but they did not just agree about something. There is a divergence of opinion. Whether it is religion I don't know. He has a big thick stick, not a walking stick—it is too thick. He has a very light-coloured suit on—kind of sporting outfit. He is a new influence; not manifested here before. Very impulsive."

All this is very true and characteristic of a Mr. Charlton whom I knew slightly, except as regards the stick; I think he fished, and it may be a jointed rod, but I am not sure. All the other details are exactly true. He was better known to a relative of mine named William than to me, and they were of different opinions in religion and politics, though my relative told me that they never discussed either, and that he liked Mr. Charlton and

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got on excellently with him, in chats in tram or train mostly. But they lived not far away from each other, and were aware enough of each other's views in a general way.

It is curious that Mr. Charlton was said to be only just waking up (from the recuperative sleep which seems to follow death), for he died a few years before. The post-mortem sleep or rest is usually an affair of months or even of days or hours ; rarely of years, though it is occasionally so—e.g. in some of the Piper cases. The remark that he “didn't quite believe he was dead” is noteworthy. It is often said that when people wake up on the other side they can hardly believe that they have died, their surroundings seem so natural and they feel so well ; but in Mr. Charlton's case there is a special significance. He died of a much-dreaded disease, the nature of which is often kept from the patient's knowledge, and in which anodynes are mercifully used towards the end. It is quite likely that in such cases the sufferer does not realise that he is dying ; and afterwards, having made the crossing so easily and so unconsciously, he may indeed “hardly believe that he is dead.”

I have quoted this as a “meeting” case,

with less justification than in the preceding ones. But the surmise is suggested by the fact that Mr. Charlton's brother was dying at the time of the sitting, though I did not know it. He died on March 6. I did not know him, even by sight, and I did not know of his illness until I saw his death announced in the newspaper. It seems likely that Mr. Charlton had come to meet his brother, as Mr. Leather came to meet Mr. Drayton, and as Mr. Walkley came to meet his widow and son.

And we must remember that this "meeting" idea is not by any means based solely on mediumistic communications. There is a very considerable body of evidence of another kind. Dying people often see spirit friends who have come to meet them. The sceptic will, of course, say that hallucinations are common enough in illness, and that a dying person's statements are not evidence of the objectivity in any sense, of what he sees. But the matter is not to be settled as easily as that. If a man, who has never had a hallucination in his life and whose mind in all other respects seems quite clear, informs us quietly when dying that he sees his father and sister—which latter died when a child, forty years before, and has consequently been

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hardly ever in his thoughts—it is mere unscientific dogmatism to say that this is subjective hallucination. It may be, of course ; but there is no basis for an assertion that it is. Moreover, there is a recognisable difference in kind between psychical and visceral hallucinations. In great weakness and with a temperature of 104.5° , I have had incipient hallucinations myself, which I noted down as soon as I could hold a pencil,¹ and they never took the shape of my deceased relatives. They were merely grotesque and dream-like.

But the argument can be carried further. Admitting that a dying person is likely to think about those who have gone before, and that this thinking may initiate hallucination, we will grant that experiences of this type must not be considered strictly evidential. But there is one kind of death-bed vision that is ; namely, when the dying person sees someone whom he does not know to be dead. Such cases are, inevitably, rare. Miss Frances Power Cobbe made a collection of them in

¹ *Journal*, Society for Psychical Research, Vol. XVI, p. 235 and following. In *Proceedings*, Vol. XIX, p. 267, Mr. Piddington analyses a number of hallucinations of visceral type, comparing them with the psychical.

her *Peak in Darien* volume, and there are several in the publications of the Society for Psychical Research, and in Sir William Barrett's book, *Death-bed Visions*.

In what has just been said we have been dealing, on the one hand, with mediumistic communications in which a spirit was said to be waiting about for a dying friend, and, on the other, with the dying person's vision of the spirit who is waiting. It would be exceedingly interesting if we could get these two kinds of evidence in combination ; for example, if I could learn that Mr. Drayton, during the last week or two of his life, saw his friend Mr. Leather and realised that he had come to meet him. This would have corroborated my mediumistic messages. But it is hardly to be expected that such corroboration will often be obtainable, for any such experiences of dying people are not talked about by surviving relatives except to intimate friends.

It is desirable that more serious notice should be taken of anything that a dying person may say than has hitherto been the rule ; particularly when there has been no sign of any impairment of mental faculty. To many good people there is no doubt

something of irreverence in this, and the idea is repellent. But though this is natural, it is seen on reflection to be a mistaken idea. Death is admittedly a solemn event, but so is birth—which is a time of rejoicing ; and so is every change in life ; even a removal from one house to another ; still more the emigration of a relative to Australia. There is an irrevocable break with the past, and a separation. All such events are to be treated seriously ; but there is no irreverence in trying to understand them to the full, and in noting down all circumstances for later consideration, particularly if it is recognised that such observation and record may furnish data which will strongly support the highest religious conceptions, rendering the old hopeless materialism entirely unscientific and irrational.

I believe such experiences are fairly common. People do not talk about them unless they are sure of a sympathetic hearing. But I have been told of many cases, and a minister friend of mine says he could have filled a book with such records, if he had taken notes.

On the mediumistic side, I think I have been more impressed by this kind of evidence

than by any other. It has happened so often, and in such good evidential conditions, that I am convinced of the truth of the comforting idea that we are met and helped. My facts have been sufficient to convince me, but the spontaneous experiences described by Barrett and others, are confirmatory.

D

CHAPTER V

A GOOD SPIRIT

I WILL now quote another case which is difficult to explain by any reading of the sitter's mind, for the facts were not known to anyone present. It has also another feature of interest. Wilkinson often said that the forms he saw were of different degrees of solidity. To some extent this seemed to be due to their recent or remote departure from earth conditions. A recently departed spirit looked solid and as real as the sitters ; a person who had been long gone looked semi-transparent and ethereal. But the character of the person had also something to do with it. A man whose interests had been largely mundane, and whose character was not high, would look opaque and solid, while a person of spiritual character would tend to be tenuous in appearance. In the case to be quoted next there was a further feature, which appeared only once or twice in my other sittings. The

woman was described as having some sort of halo of light around her, and the medium interpreted this as an indication of piety or exceptional spiritual character ; and this turned out to be true. One wonders whether the haloes round the heads of saints, in old pictures, were really seen, either by the painters or by clairvoyants who had seen this ring of background of light round the saint in question. I suppose it would be symbolic only, for I do not think that Wilkinson was really seeing with his physical eyes when he saw these forms. Indeed he used to say that when he was giving clairvoyance in a large hall he could often see details of the appearance of forms at such a distance from him that he would not have been able even to recognise a friend with his own eyes. Light has always been a symbol of spiritual stature, as in the Transfiguration, the angel who was seen in robes white and glistening, and so on. Some such general symbolism there evidently is, for in the case to be quoted there was no reason for the appearance of the halo unless it did indicate the character of the person seen. None of us knew anything about the woman in question, nor indeed did we know of her existence. It was only afterwards,

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when I made inquiry, that I found out the facts. The other point which naturally occurs to us, namely, how these unknown people were able to manifest, is a mystery. The recent presence of their relative had something to do with it, but we do not understand how.

In a sitting on November 9, 1916, there occurred the following :

A. W. : " Did you know somebody called Ruth Robertshaw? R U T H."

J. A. H. : " I don't remember anybody at the moment."

A. W. : " About sixty-three or sixty-four. She has known somebody who has been here. ' Ruth Robertshaw ' is not a common combination. I saw her perfectly. A crescent-shaped light was over her head, and her face was illumined. She would be inclined to be rather pious in her way."

(Quite meaningless to me. Never heard of any Ruth Robertshaw.)

" This woman Ruth is no relation to you, I think. . . . There was a gentleman belonging to her, called Jacob. I think he would be her husband. Whoever he was, he was older than her. He would be seventy-three. She would be about ten years younger;

it may be in the time between them passing away—I'm not sure. I don't see him ; I only hear it."

All this conveyed nothing to me. But previous experience warned me not to dismiss it hastily, and it occurred to me to write to the last visitor I had had, three days before, in case the two people belonged to her ; though I thought it unlikely, because she is a Miss North, and I knew of no Robertshaws among her relatives or friends. She lived at a distance of some miles, not in Wilkinson's direction ; and she had never met him, I had never mentioned her to him, she is not a spiritualist or psychical researcher, and I am confident that he did not know of her existence. She called only rarely—perhaps three times a year. Her reply was :

"You make me feel creepy. Ruth Robertshaw was my father's cousin—one of the sweetest women that ever lived. She was a beautiful old lady when I knew her, and good. Jacob was her husband. The ages given are just about right. . . ."

I have since found the exact dates. Ruth died in 1888, aged sixty-three ; Jacob died in 1900, aged seventy-three.

The medium also made correct statements

of the nature of messages from these two people, concerning a family related to them but unknown to me, a member of which was said to be ill. All turned out correct.

I regard this as approaching "crucial" proof of super-normality, even for the outsider, if my statements are believed. To me it is conclusive of something beyond either normal knowledge on the medium's part or telepathy from me; and indeed, I can find no satisfactory explanation except the spiritistic one. Apparently those on the other side are aware of the movements of those in whom they are still interested down here, and are in some sense "with" them, even to the extent of being perceivable by a sensitive through an after-influence left some days before.

If it is urged that the influence does not bring spirits but only establishes a rapport by which Wilkinson was able to read the mind of the distant and unknown Miss North, I say that only a credulous and superstitious person can accept such a hypothesis; for there is little or no evidence for a hypothetical mind-reading of that kind.

It has often happened that the medium has seen forms which were connected with my last visitor, although the medium could hardly have known who that last visitor was. I never told him anything about my friends or visitors, lest it should spoil possible evidence. In the case just quoted, it is perhaps desirable to make this quite clear. The last visitor to enter the room in which the sitting was held was Miss North, and her visit had occurred three days before. If the medium was an impostor and was deliberately giving pretended evidence concerning my last visitor, he would in this case have had to have the doors of my house watched, in order to learn who the last visitor was. This would have involved the posting of detectives at front and back doors, which open on entirely different roads, for three days and evenings. The visit in question was on a November evening, well after dark, and recognition would not have been easy. Then the detective would have had to make inquiries about Miss North's deceased relatives. Of course it is all very absurd, but I mention it in order that the reader is assured, as he has a right to be, that fraud is out of the question.

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By the way, the halo of light, indicating high spiritual character, has been seen with a few other forms, for example, my mother, in whose case also it was very appropriate and true.

CHAPTER VI

THE LUND CASE : WAS TELEPATHY EXCLUDED ?¹

IN the cases hitherto quoted in this book, some of the facts given mediumistically were consciously known to me, and the critical reader will suppose that my mind was perhaps read. When I did not know the facts consciously, I might know them subliminally, particularly when they concerned local people whom I might have known and forgotten. In the next case, however, the people were unknown and distant, living in a part of the country two hundred miles from my home, a part which I have never visited.

At a sitting of March 22, 1918, Wilkinson said :

“There is some young man behind me all

¹ Part of the matter in this chapter appeared in my book *From Agnosticism to Belief*, published in 1924, and now out of print. I have to thank Messrs. Methuen and Co., Ltd., for permission to reprint.

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the time. Been a soldier, been in an infantry regiment. I see and feel the dress. Age thirty or more. A big chap. It was The Buffs. Perhaps it is someone you may hear of."

He then took up the pad and pencil, and wrote something, saying : " This is unusual." (He had not got any automatic writing at my sittings for some time.) He gave the pad to me, and I saw that the writing was :

Napier Lund, The Buffs. 1916

	3
1	B
2	N
3	

This meant nothing to me.

In a few minutes Wilkinson said : " The writing is to do with the man I saw behind me " ; and, taking the pad again, he made some addition and handed it back to me. It then read :

Napier Lund, The Buffs. 1916

	3
1	B
2	N
3	

Write Father. R.
Have had a reception.
Please write Father. R.

Being associated with Sir Oliver Lodge in psychical affairs, I supposed that the purporting communicator was Raymond Lodge. I accordingly said : " I think I know who to write to, but should like to know what I am to write." This was said with the idea of eliciting further evidential matter. I handed the pad back to Wilkinson, who then wrote automatically :

" Mention Willoughby Cross."

I said I would make inquiries. Wilkinson seemed much puzzled, and rather distressed, saying that he did not know any of the names and that he was afraid they might be all wrong.

The only thing that the writing suggested to me, beyond the supposition that Raymond was the agent, was that the Lunds mentioned might be friends of the Lodge family, for I knew that the latter were acquainted with people of that name. But I knew none of the Lund Christian names. I wrote to Sir Oliver, enclosing a copy of the script, and he replied as follows :

“The Wilkinson script of March 22 meant nothing to me, but I asked my daughters at breakfast whether they knew a Napier Lund. They said, ‘Certainly, a young cousin of the Lunds, who has been killed; he had a brother Basil.’ I said ‘Was Basil the elder?’ but they did not know. I said ‘Was there another child?’ They said they thought so, perhaps a daughter. This was afterwards confirmed by Lady Lodge.

“I then said, ‘Do you know what regiment he was in?’ and they said some southern regiment, The Buffs, they thought.

“So when I showed them your copy of the script, they were much interested. Up to that, I had showed them nothing, nor told them why I was asking. They seem to know both Napier and Basil Lund, and to like them. Both have been killed.

“I asked if they knew any Crosses. They said ‘Yes,’ but they did not know of a Willoughby Cross. I propose to ask further about that.”

I quote this *in extenso* because, as will afterwards appear, it is an important point in the evidence that Sir Oliver himself could not confirm the script from his own knowledge.

On April 5, 1918, I had another sitting with Wilkinson, and at the beginning I told him that the script of March 22 was very good ; that Napier Lund was correct, that he was in The Buffs, and that the figure 3 seemed to be a reference to three people in the family, one of them a daughter. I told him all this, somewhat contrary to my custom, because he seemed interested and also anxious ; for the writing had been unusual, and he was afraid it might mean nothing. So I wanted to encourage him as much as possible.

In this sitting of April 5, after a few things concerning my own affairs and concerning some objects from a distant and unknown person who had asked me to try for psychometry (with remarkable results, as it appeared, but I must not digress to quote them here), Wilkinson broke off and said :

“ There is some young man, tall, in khaki. A big chap, young, clean-shaven, rather deep brow, darkish hair. I can see his face to the side of you ” (J. A. H.). “ Smart build. An officer, not a private soldier.” (Medium writes something.) “ This is going to be the same as before ; it was Napier Lund.” (Looks at writing.) “ Why, it is Napier

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Stuart ! I was expecting Lund, and my hand wrote Stuart ! I am sure I never thought of Stuart. I don't think it was Napier Lund that I described." (Writes again.)

"I wonder what that stands for, E. K. ?" (Writes again.) "'The Buffs. East Kents. Napier Lund.' That is funny. I wonder who it is that is writing ? My hand would go right fast if I would let it."

J. A. H. : "Well let it go."

A. W. : "But I want it to be legible." (Hands script to J. A. H.) It was as follows :

Napier Stuart, E. K.

The Buffs. East Kents.

Had a brother Basil who comes along as well.

We are jolly. "Also of the Buffs."

Wilkinson said : "It bothers me that it said Lund before, and now Stuart." I assured him, however, that it would probably turn out right somehow, as the earlier script did. After an interlude of very good evidential matter concerning some deceased friends of mine, the medium got some more writing, and said :

"Your supposition must be wrong about

the daughter, for it says ' We are brothers.' ”
(Gives script to J. A. H. It contained additional matter as follows.)

The old Major-general is here.

1 N. S. We are brothers.

2 B

3 A not The Buffs

General Willoughby Cross.

Irish.

A roughly drawn bracket did not clearly indicate whether it was meant to include all three, or only two, as brothers. I said something to that effect, still holding to the opinion that the third was a daughter. As we found later, Lady Lodge was quite right about there being a daughter, in fact, two ; but they are still living in the flesh. The A turned out to apply to a brother named Arthur who had died about the same time that Napier and Basil were killed. Arthur was not in the Army.

After other matter relating to me, Wilkinson said :

“ I should not think it is these people who are writing. Somebody else seems to be doing it for them.” (Probably Raymond.)

“ It must be right, there were three

brothers. That will be painful, if three brothers are killed. You had better not tell them."

(No doubt thinking that perhaps the news of the third casualty might not have arrived normally.)

J. A. H. : " We will be careful not to cause anyone pain."

A. W. : " This writing is peculiar. I don't remember ever having anything like this before. You said the third might be a daughter, and I was impressed to write that it was three brothers. It would be interesting to find out."

J. A. H. : " Yes, we will find out."

Wilkinson here gave me the script, which in full was as follows :

Napier Stuart, E. K. The Buffs. East Kents.

Had a brother Basil who comes along as well.

We are jolly. " Also of the Buffs." (Referring to Basil, apparently.)

The old Major-General is here.

1 N. S.

2 B We are brothers.

3 A not the Buffs.

General Willoughby Cross.

Irish.

1 N. S.

2 B 3 brothers.

3 A.

I sent a report of this to Sir Oliver, who, however, was away. On his return he wrote :

“I have returned home, and one of the first questions I asked my daughters was : ‘ Who is Napier Stuart ? ’ One of the twins did not know, but the other one said that Stuart was Napier Lund’s second name. Hence the Napier Stuart seems to be correct. But they know nothing of a third brother named A.”

Sir Oliver further remarked that he would make inquiries through a friend who knew more of the Lund family.

At my next sitting, on April 11, 1918, there was an attempt at further automatic writing, and the names Basil Lund and Napier Stuart Lund were written, but nothing new appeared except the figures 26 and 30, which I took to be the ages of the soldiers mentioned. These turned out to be correct. They were killed in 1916.

2

At my next sitting, on June 7, 1918, after some evidential matter concerning a soldier who had been killed and whose mother I knew, the medium said :

“There is another young man here, named Lund. Not a soldier. Not very young ; I have a feeling that he would be getting set in body, and perhaps thirty-six or thirty-seven. Dark clothes, ordinary attire, Well dressed. He had something to do with those other Lunds that the script was about. The name is Arthur, and he was the eldest of them. There were four sons, and the fourth has died young—a child.”

This last item about a child having died in that family was new to me, and I felt pretty sure it was wrong ; for by this time I had obtained a good deal of information about the Lunds, and there had been no mention of any child having died. But further inquiry showed it to be true.

Then followed matter which I must omit because it would reveal identities. I have used pseudonyms for the real names and for the regiment, this being requested by living relatives of the “Lunds” ; but the regiment’s real name and its popular one have the same sort of relationship as the pseu-

donyms used, and the disguise does not affect the evidential aspect of the case.

Now to discuss these details.

Practically all the details given are correct. To save space I have omitted full description of the gradual verification of first one and then another incident, and it suffices to say that everything was right, except that Wiloughby Cross (pseudonym) seems to have been Colonel and not Major-General. He did command an "Irish" regiment, as said. But there is no complete certainty about his rank. He died in India, and may have been Acting Major-General. We are not sure. Everything else was correct. Napier Stuart Lund and his brother Basil Lund were known to Raymond Lodge, the three of them went through part of their training at the same camp. It is quite in keeping that Raymond should bring them. The brother Arthur also was known to him, being indeed mainly concerned, with an officer friend, in arranging about Raymond's commission. Nothing of this, however, did I know. Nor did Sir Oliver ; he was in Australia when the war began and Raymond joined up.

The critic's first point will rightly be : Could the medium possess all the information

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in his own mind, by casual or purposed acquisition? My answer would be that there is no final and coercive certainty in any inductive problem. You cannot prove coercively that the earth is spheroid in shape; an alternative hypothesis is always possible. Flat-earth cranks still exist. In matters such as psychical research, which is almost new as a branch of science, there is still more uncertainty. I cannot prove that the medium did not possess the necessary knowledge. But, taking all the circumstances into consideration, and putting it at its lowest, it is very unlikely that he did. And it must not be forgotten that in many other cases I am quite sure he did not. The total evidence in this Lund case is wider than I have been able to quote. It extended in several directions. Willoughby Cross was a member of a family well known to the Lodges thirty years ago, but not known to the Lunds. And there were other ramifications. It is incredible to me that the medium could have got up the case and equally incredible that he should have such full and accurate knowledge by accidental acquirement. On the other hand, everything is in keeping if we admit the possibility of survival and com-

munication. This is the kind of thing that we should expect Raymond to do for us—the bringing of evidence of this specially ingenious and significant kind. And we are not here dealing with a new medium of whom nothing is known but with one whose supernatural powers have been proved by many years of systematic and careful investigation.

A notable point, in view of the often made suggestion that the sitter's mind influences the medium's statements, is the insistence of the script on the fact of the three being brothers, in face of my insistence that the third was a daughter. Similarly about the fourth son who had died in childhood. I felt sure that this was wrong—the verifications so far having mentioned no fourth son—but it turned out right. As a matter of fact I have never found my thoughts reflected by Wilkinson's clairvoyance, or even influencing it in the smallest degree ; it has happened over and over again that the script or the clairvoyance has differed from my own belief on matters of fact, and has turned out to be right. This seems to argue a mind external to the medium's—a mind which knows very well what it is wanting to get through, and is not to be influenced by what I happen to

be thinking, or even by what I say. In Wilkinson's mediumship I have never been able to discover any evidence of telepathy from my mind.

In the series of incidents under discussion telepathy from my mind is ruled out by still weightier considerations. I certainly had no conscious knowledge of any of the facts given. And as to any supposed subliminal knowledge, I am as sure as I am of almost anything that I had known nothing about these Lunds. I had no sort of interest in them, they lived far away from me, they were not interested in psychical research, and, in short, our orbits were wide apart.

But the telepathic interpretation, when pressed as far as possible, postulates that not only the mind of the sitter may be read, but also the mind of anyone known to him. . In the case just quoted, however, the facts were not known to anyone I had ever met. Sir Oliver I knew—he had stayed with us, and perhaps Raymond was thus enabled to find the way, so to speak—but Sir Oliver did not know any of the facts given ; he had to make inquiries, not only of members of his own family, but also farther afield. Most of the matter had to be verified by application to

people of whom I had never even heard. This "link" telepathy—the reading of some mind that is known to the sitter—is therefore ruled out as an explanation of the facts just related.

There remains the possibility of telepathy from some distant mind which has no connecting link of any kind with sitter or medium. I confess that this makes too great a demand on my credulity.

I do not say that a hypothesis of this sort is impossible, but it raises many difficulties. It seems to me rather like the old Ptolemaic astronomy which, as new facts became known about the planets' motions, had to invent more and more epicycles to account for them, until the theory became very complicated. Then it was found that by supposing the sun to be the centre, with the planets revolving round it, the whole thing became simplified, fell into shape and was understandable without any tortured hypotheses. It seems to me that the hypothesis of discarnate agency is analogous to the Copernican theory.

CHAPTER VII

A CORRESPONDENT APPEARS ¹

AS already said, my sittings were mainly concerned with communications from my parents, grandparents—on my mother's side—and various other relatives and friends. I have a good deal of this kind of evidence in my book *Psychical Investigations*, now out of print. But it is natural to suppose that the medium might have been able to obtain information about my own people, though I am quite sure he did not. For one thing, some of the evidence could not have been obtained by inquiry. Still, readers might believe that this was how it was done. So in this volume I am keeping almost entirely to evidence concerning other people. In some cases they were known to me, for example, Mr. Leather and his friend Dray-

¹ I have to thank Messrs. Rider and Co. for permission to reprint parts of this chapter and the next, from my book *Psychical Science and Religious Belief*.

ton ; though their friend Sidney was not, and seemed to be brought by Mr. Leather in order to disprove telepathy from me. In the Robertshaw and Lund cases the people were not known to me at all. In the next case there is a mixture. I had a large correspondence in the days of which I am writing ; people read my books and articles, and wrote to me about them. In most cases, I never made the personal acquaintance of these correspondents. Here was a good opportunity of evidence, if the spirit explanation was a true one. If one of my correspondents died, in some distant town with which I had no other connexion, and if I was unlikely to see any newspaper notice of his death, and if our correspondence had ceased a year or two before his passing, I should not know, and I should have no reason to surmise, anything about his death. I should not know whether he were alive or dead. Indeed after a year or two I should have almost forgotten him. If then he could communicate, it would be rather good evidence. And if he could tell me how long it was since he died, and in particular if he could tell me any family details which I had never known, it would be very interesting. A case of this kind is

now to be described. I use pseudonyms, for obvious reasons.

May 7, 1924.

“There is a man with papers, a tall man, very tall. Something ailed him that he could not walk. As tall as you, or taller. The papers say : ‘The Last Will and Testament.’ It is a will ; he used to make them ; he was a lawyer. He has left a bairn, not very old. He lived a long way from here, but he knows you, and you have seen him. Can you remember going a long way, in the country, where there is a tall man, sick, a long way from here, some while ago ? And then you went to see someone who took photographs ; this man is holding out photographs. Flat country, trees and a house. I can’t hear him speak.”

This made me think of a certain man, but it was about all I could do to get all the matter down verbatim, and I did not indicate recognition. The medium came and prodded my shoulder, with a gesture of impatience, saying that I must have a bad memory.

“Wich. Place with a ‘wich’ in it. That man was very alert mentally, but he can’t speak. Perhaps it is the first time he has

tried. This man knew you, and you knew him. Some 'wich,' and pictures. He will come again another time. He had had two wives. One is over with him, the other is behind in the body. Very tall. Could not walk. Not much over fifty. He lived away from here ; he is not familiar with these surroundings. You have had conversations and correspondence with this man. He has been over a wee while, not just gone. Now I see a piece of cheese. I seem to see a great big whole cheese. A Cheshire cheese. This man is a clever man, but clever folk do not always succeed in doing things."

All this was interesting, for I had visited Nantwich in Cheshire, in August, 1920, mainly for the purpose of having sittings with the psychic photographer, Hope, of Crewe. I had made the acquaintance of a Nantwich solicitor named Beverley while there, but I knew nothing of his domestic affairs or whether, at the time of the sitting, he was alive or dead.

August 21, 1924.

"There is a very tall man here, taller than you ; he has a lot of papers ; he might be a lawyer. I feel that he could not walk ;

he had had a stroke, perhaps, but he was not old—a bit older than you. He was connected with the law. Something was wrong with his leg or legs. He wants to get something through to you. Has he anyone called Billy belonging to him, perhaps a pet name for somebody? Very tall. There is a kind of sympathy between him and you, close feeling; you had much in common. He wants to get nearer still, to get something through.”

At a later sitting there were other references to this man, but they mostly repeated what had been said before.

As I have said, when the first reference came I thought of Mr. Beverley, the solicitor whom I had met in August, 1920, but it seemed rather unlikely that this was the right man; for one thing, he was too young, I thought, certainly much under fifty. Then, a while after the sitting of May 7, 1924, I remembered that I had had some correspondence, a few years before, with a Nantwich solicitor whom I will call Pearson. We corresponded mostly about psychic photography, and about Hope in particular. I never met him; he was away when I happened to visit Nantwich later on, and

I did not even call at his house. I knew nothing about his home affairs. All that I knew about him was that he had had a seizure, for he mentioned it in a letter, apologising for his bad writing. After some time, I made inquiries, and found that he had been married twice, that his second wife survived him and was still living, that he had left a young child, that he was very tall—six feet two—and it was true enough that we had much in common and looked at these things very much in the same way. If we had known each other personally, we should almost certainly have been good friends. But we never met, so the medium was wrong on that point; he seemed to misinterpret his impressions, as he sometimes did. Feeling that we were friendly and had much in common, he jumped to the conclusion that we knew each other personally. The “Billy” is unrecognised, but may have some meaning. His age at death was fifty-seven, so the medium’s statement was correct. The seizure which he had a year or two before death had impaired his speech and power of walking; in fact he could hardly talk or walk at all; but his mind was very alert. All this I learnt from a Nantwich doctor

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whom I knew slightly, and who knew Pearson well. Mr. Pearson died on November 20, 1921.

I need hardly say that I had never mentioned Mr. Pearson to Wilkinson. I did not talk to him about my correspondents or about any of my interests or affairs, lest I should spoil possible evidence.

CHAPTER VIII

A CORRESPONDENT'S STEP-MOTHER

IN the last chapter I described a case in which I was given information about a correspondent from whom I had not heard for some years and whom I did not know to be dead. I had never met him, but I had met one man who knew him, though this meeting was before the death of my correspondent. I had, however, learnt nothing about Mr. Pearson's personality or illness or of his home affairs. But in the next case to be described, there was not even a link of this kind.

Some time before 1924 I had corresponded, to the extent of a few letters on each side, with a Miss Bubb who lived near Cheltenham. She kindly allows me to use her real name and the names of her people who were mentioned in the sittings. The letters were entirely about psychical matters, and I knew nothing of her relatives or affairs generally.

I knew nothing about her age, so had no idea whether she was likely to have living parents or not. I did not know anyone who knew her, and she did not know anyone who knew me. She had read some of my books, but there was no personal acquaintance, even of an indirect kind. I had no reason to expect anything about her to appear in my sittings, and what happened was surprising. I will quote from my original records, as usual.

August 21, 1924.

"There is an old lady here, a very well-dressed old woman. She lived a great way from here, and passed out near the water. A great age. Someone belonging to her was called Henry. This lady was a rather outstanding personality. She lived in affluent circumstances. Somebody belonging to her was called Henry Walker.

"There is something like Bubbles. You can put Bubble down, without the S. Three B's. Bubbles. Bubb, not Bubbles. Bubbs. Someone has brought this old lady here. Quite a stranger. There is likely to be some sequence to this. She has passed away not far from the ocean."

At this point, I asked whether it was in

England or America, for there had been some clairvoyance which applied to a friend of ours in the States. The control continued :

"In England, I think. A rich dress on. You will hear something about her. Singular, not plural, not an S. A woman of strong mind. She wants a message given to somebody ; she has come here to get a message through to someone. . . . I hope that old lady's curiosity will be satisfied. Did you take it down about Bubbles ? There is someone called Henry, and something about the ocean. Got to the other side of the tide. A very old person, and very well cared for."

I sent this report to Miss Bubb, for it seemed pretty certain that the message was intended for her. She replied as below :

"Thank you for your letter of the 22nd inst. Yes, the description of the old lady is for us, and to me it seems a very valuable test, inasmuch as you and I have never met, and Mr. Wilkinson had never even heard of me. The old lady is my step-mother, who passed over on January 30, 1924. She was an exceptionally clever woman, with a scientific type of mind, and of late years her greatest interest has been in psychical research and Spiritualism, in which latter she sincerely

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believed. She was much interested in my correspondence with you. She was very much of an outstanding personality, with a clear brain and great determination. It is just like her to try to get a test through, in such a way that telepathy can hardly be invoked as an explanation."

Miss Bubb went on to say that her step-mother had given good evidence of her identity through two London mediums, in one case the name being got through by the use of variants of the word "bubbles," as in the present case. Miss Bubb proceeded to inform me that the conjunction of Walker with Henry was the only error, but this had, nevertheless, a significance. Further, that the facts given applied with extreme correctness to her step-mother, who died at Weston-super-Mare, on the day after her ninetieth birthday. Her husband's (Miss Bubb's father's) name was Henry. Walker was Mrs. Bubb's second Christian name, and was the surname of her maternal grandfather.

At my next sitting, on December 12, 1924, the medium said, in normal clairvoyance :

"There is an old woman in this corner. She has a very nice face. She has very white hair, and is proud of it. She is very old.

Been pretty well off, by her dress. Silk dress. Sarah. She has something in her hands, a handkerchief. Age eighty-five or eighty-six. A strong personality. Have you known a Sarah Walker? That woman has lived at a nice house. I seem to get inside it; a beautiful house, and trees. It doesn't seem about here. She is very anxious to reach somebody. I think she has a dog. You don't know anything about anybody at Charlton Kings?"

This was correct for the name, for Miss Bubb had said in her letter that her step-mother's full name was Sarah Walker Bubb. The handkerchief meant nothing to me, and "Charlton Kings" was new to me.

"There has been a Henry connected with her. This is a stranger. Very rich dress, a modern dress, not old-fashioned. I can't get detached from this old woman. You may hear from someone belonging to her. I feel that she wants Henry. Put down Sarah Walker; it is significant. This woman is a nice woman. She has had her own way about things. I can see some bubbles rising up by that bookcase." (Where the old lady had been described as standing.) "I have never seen anything like that before."

I sent a copy of this to Miss Bubb, who replied that everything was correct.

"All the new details are evidential. Charlton Kings, handkerchief, dog, having her own way about things, white hair, and all. As you mention, you know nothing about my people except what I have told you in confirming correct details, and I think you will agree that I give away nothing except what is necessary to elucidate these points, in the hope that at a future date other evidential details may come through. These sittings are most interesting, and appear to me most convincing."

Miss Bubb went on to say that the family were very proud of Mrs. Bubb's particularly beautiful silvery white hair. Mrs. Bubb often wore silk, and preferred it to other materials. Miss Bubb at the beginning of her letter said that she did not understand the handkerchief, but added at the end of her letter that she remembered, on thinking about it, that there was a family joke about her step-mother's habit of carrying a handkerchief about, even to the extent of taking it into the water when she went sea-bathing. One of the maids remarked that she knew what sort of mood Mrs. Bubb was in, by the use she made

of the handkerchief. The age was not quite correct, being given as about eighty-six, whereas Mrs. Bubb was ninety. The remark about a dog was appropriate, for Mrs. Bubb had been much attached to two dogs, at different times, and Miss Bubb had been hoping that some mention might be made of them. Charlton Kings, Miss Bubb informed me, is the name of a village or suburb near Cheltenham ; her step-mother would pass through it often in her younger days, and it is quite in keeping that she should mention it, by way of eliminating a telepathic hypothesis. The "Henry" is, of course, Mr. Henry Bubb, her husband, and Miss Bubb says that during her step-mother's illness she wanted her husband to be with her as much as possible, indeed "was never happy unless he was in the room."

This seems to me to be one of my best cases. I had never mentioned the Bubbles to Wilkinson, and I had no expectation that anything referring to them would occur at my sittings. So, even if we assumed that Wilkinson had heard of the family, we still have to remember that he did not know of any connexion with myself. And the details are too numerous and indeed too intimate to be

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accounted for by normal knowledge; for instance, the handkerchief incident. Telepathy from me was out of the question, for I had never known anything about the people concerned. Telepathy from anyone I had ever met was also excluded, for I had never met any of the Bubbs or indeed anyone known to them.

CHAPTER IX

FOREIGN LANGUAGES THROUGH MEDIUMS¹

EVEN if survival and communication are facts, it is natural and reasonable to suppose that it would be difficult or perhaps impossible for a communicator to transmit words in a language which is unknown to the medium. But there is a certain amount of evidence of this kind, and I was wishful to obtain some through Wilkinson. Accordingly, on the appearance of my old school-master, Thomas Waldron, at one of my sittings, I asked him to get some message through in Greek or Latin if possible, on some later occasion. I will not quote here the identifying evidence concerning Mr. Waldron himself, for it was not extensive, and of

¹ The cases quoted in this chapter are condensed from the accounts given in my book *Psychical Science and Religious Belief*, from which Messrs. Rider and Co. permit me to make extracts.

course he was well known in the district until he died in 1898, which, however, was long before I knew Wilkinson. The sceptic will be justified in thinking that a pretended medium could obtain information about him by inquiry, even twenty years later. So I do not quote the evidence for his identity. But his name was correctly given, and there seemed good indications that he was really present, so I asked for Greek or Latin. I expected Latin, which was his favourite subject. Indeed some Latin did come, but it consisted of well-known words, and did not constitute real evidence, so I do not quote it. But at a later sitting there was a little more—only three words—which were of some interest. I will quote them in this chapter.

I will also quote some Italian, which came at the same time. I do not advance the contents of this chapter as being very evidential. I should hardly have been impressed at all if the medium had been a new one of whom I knew nothing. But I knew him well, and was satisfied that he was an honest man. Whatever the explanation of what happened, I do not believe it was fraud.

May 14, 1926. Medium in trance.

"I can see a man with a peculiar cap, college cap, or something like that. I don't see anything but his face and head. Now I can see his shoulders. Elderly but not old." (Medium writes automatically on pad, and reads or rather spells it out as follows :) "*Terar dum prosim.* I can see a lighted candle, as if the man were holding it in his hand. I had a funny feeling from him. He is interested to be here. What strikes me most is the candle. I believe the man with the candle was called Thomas. . . .

"There is a gentleman with a candle who used to speak to you personally in a school. He was not severe, but used to speak with stentorian voice." (Incorrect as to voice; he was quiet in manner. Correct that he was not severe.) "He brought the candle, and gave the motto, and perhaps was trying to give you some more and the power stopped. The gentleman Thomas has visited you before, and it has been his wish to speak to you words that my medium does not understand."

Latin was my old schoolmaster's favourite subject, but the three Latin words were

unknown to me. "*Prosit*" is common in German toasts, as an equivalent of our "Good health," but I thought that the *terar* was probably a mistake for *terra*.

After some other matter referring to my deceased friends, the medium got some automatic writing which read as follows: *Secolo Luigi Vasallo*. The medium remarked that this was someone who had not been before but was trying to attach himself to me for some purpose. He got the further impression of Genoa, in Italy.

"There is a man, I don't know where he would belong, not English, Scots, or Irish. He used to write a lot. He is showing me a motto." (Spells out.) "M A Z Z I N I. This name is a clue to the motto. This man was awfully clever in his way; had to do with books and papers, like yourself. Birds of a feather. I may not have got the motto just right; there may be other words."

The control then referred to my old school-master, saying that this latter had given the motto and had done so because he was wishful to give me words that the medium would not understand. Other matter followed concerning my own people, and nothing more was said about Luigi Vasallo or Mazzini or

the motto, which I took to be *Terra dum prosim*. I inquired among my scholastic friends, and they said that it was not a classical tag. They did not recognise it as anything known to them. They thought it might mean "while on earth may I be of service," or something like that, though it seemed like a fragment of a longer phrase, and the *terra* should perhaps be in the dative—*terrae*—to be grammatically correct. I am not familiar with Mazzini's life, but some such motto would certainly be appropriate. His generally known motto was "God and the People." It is perhaps rather noteworthy that at the time of this sitting—May 14, 1926—this country was facing the crisis of the great strike, which would be extremely interesting to Mazzini if he is still taking an interest in mundane affairs.

The name Luigi Vasallo was new to me, and I had no Italian friend whom I could consult for verification; but I knew that Miss E. M. Bubb—mentioned at length in the foregoing chapter—spent much time in Italy and was acquainted with Professor Bozzano, so I sent a copy of the report to her. I thought it possible that the incident might be a further attempt on the part of Mrs.

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Henry Bubb to give something that should be specially good evidence. Miss Bubb inquired of Professor Bozzano, who replied that Luigi Vassallo (spelt thus) had been an intimate friend of his. The full name was Luigi Arnaldo Vassallo, but he was always known as Luigi Vassallo. He was the editor of the Genoese paper, *Il Secolo Decimo Nono* (*Nineteenth Century*), and he was born in Genoa. His wife was the daughter of one of the great conspirators, and Vassallo knew Mazzini and looked up to him as a prophet. It will be noted that the name is "Vassallo," not "Vasallo" ; but that is the only mistake in the script.

At my next sitting, on July 9, 1926, Wilkinson saw with me the form of a young man of fifteen or sixteen, dark in complexion, or tanned, wearing a very light suit, not ordinary cloth. The medium felt that I was to write to Miss Bubb about him. (He knew her name by this time, for I had told him that I had asked a Miss Bubb to assist in verifying former matter.) Wilkinson then proceeded to get some automatic writing, which he spelt out as it came : *Nel Mono delgi*. He then remarked that he thought it was a book. I saw that it was Italian, but

obviously incorrect, so I remarked that it was not right, but said no more. Wilkinson again saw the young man of fifteen or sixteen, and said that he had been on the other side some time. He then went into trance, and the control spelt out the words : *Nel Mondo degli*. The control remarked : "This is written down in a book." Then the word *circulo* was spelt out, and the control said : "Something about a fish. Minerva. Something to do with a fish. A lady's name." Wilkinson soon after this became normal, but was still clairvoyant ; he saw over my head the word *invisibili*, which he spelt out. This was the end of the sitting.

I thought the phrase intended was *Nel Mondo degli Circoli Invisibili*—*In the World of the Invisible Spheres*. It sounded like the title of a book, but I knew of no such book. I made inquiries of Professor Bozzano, and found that *Nel Mondo degli Invisibili*—"In the World of the Invisibles"—is the title of a book written by Luigi Vassallo. The *Circolo* belonged to the "Minerva," for Vassallo was the president of a group which experimented with Eusapia Palladino and was known as the "Circolo Scientifico Minerva." The young man was Vassallo's son, who died about 1890,

aged fifteen. He was devoted to outdoor sports, and the description—part of which I have omitted—was correct. The clothes were perhaps flannels, to suggest his athletic tastes. One of the members of the Minerva Circle was known to Mrs. Bubb. It is noteworthy that both she and Luigi Vassallo were rather vigorously opposed to the easy invoking of telepathy as explanation of almost all psychical phenomena of the mental type, and it would seem that the incidents of these sittings were planned by them in order to exclude the telepathic hypothesis, at least so far as I was concerned, or indeed Miss Bubb, for she knew nothing about Vassallo's book, or about his son.

The sceptic would, of course, say that the medium had normal knowledge of the facts. I cannot disprove this, but neither can the sceptic prove it. We have to estimate the probabilities. Wilkinson was not a great reader, and he knew no Italian. I have been a great reader, with a moderate knowledge of Italian ; in fact, at one time I reviewed psychical books that appeared in that language ; but I had no recollection of ever hearing of Vassallo. It therefore seems to me unlikely that Wilkinson had heard of

him. Moreover, I have had so much evidence through Wilkinson that cannot possibly be explained on the supposition of normally acquired knowledge, that I am not ready to accept, without evidence in its support, the mere assumption that in any specific case he possessed the required knowledge, even when it was physically possible. He said, in reply to my inquiry, that he had never heard of Luigi Vassallo or the Minerva Circle. The hypothesis of subliminal memory would be similarly an unsupported assumption, though not altogether illegitimate for those who feel that the evidence does not force them beyond it. As to any assistance from my mind, it is to be noted that I thought the word for "sphere" was mistakenly put in the singular, whereas it was I who was wrong, for it referred to the Minerva Circle, not to the *invisibili* of the book's title, and thus had the correct ending.

Now as to the motto, *Terar dum prosim*. As I have said, I thought that the first word was wrong. But after many months I found that the motto was quite right. I was informed by a correspondent who had read my account in the book just mentioned in a footnote, that it occurs in a book entitled

The Carlyles' Chelsea Home, by Reginald Blunt, published in 1895. It appears that Thomas Carlyle made a sketch for a seal, in 1823, with a hand holding a lighted candle, with the words *Terar dum prosim*. The meaning was, "May I be wasted, so that I be of use." Carlyle wrote beneath the sketch: "But what if I do not *prosim*? Why, then, *terar* still, so I cannot help it. This is the end and the beginning of all philosophy." Mr. Blunt's book gives an illustration of the sketch, and he remarks that the seal is on view at Cheyne Row. Mazzini was a frequent visitor at Cheyne Row, and it is possible that the motto had some association with him, but this is only conjecture. My guess is that my old school-master had read Blunt's book, and got the information through, as a good piece of evidence; but I do not regard this as strong evidence.

CHAPTER X

STANLEY POWER¹

THERE is good reason to believe that excessive grief on the part of those left behind is a trouble to those who have gone. These latter accordingly sometimes try to get a message through, assuring the bereaved that their loved one is still alive and is well and happy. When the bereaved people, however, have no interest in psychical things, it is difficult for the departed one to get his message across. In the case to be quoted next, I was the intermediary, and Aaron Wilkinson was the medium. I quote from verbatim records made at the time.

Wilkinson said he had never heard of the people concerned ; they live in a town at some distance from his home, and are not prominent in any way. I have used

¹ Parts of some of the following chapters have appeared in the weekly paper *Light*, but they have been revised and re-written.

pseudonyms in this case, for obvious reasons.

At a sitting on July 28, 1925, the medium said as below :

“ I feel the presence of another young man here. A stranger. Not more than 23 or 24 ; not as tall as the other, moderate in height, clean shaven. Power. He has passed away. A very clever young chap. He would be ill a little while ; a lengthy illness . . . Stanley Power. He had a letter to his name, letters at the end. He was a scholarly man. Stanley . . .

“ That young man must have a mother living in the body. I feel as if I want to reach my mother. I don't think he has been passed over a very long time. He had got letters after his name for being a good scholar.”

(J. A. H. : “ Did he live about here ? ”)

“ I don't know.

“ That young man Power had to do with a school. I am impressed about a school. There is some woman in the body, I think it is his mother. . . . I cannot tell where he lived.”

The above meant nothing to me ; the name Stanley Power was quite unknown.

At another sitting a fortnight later, a woman was described in great detail, apparently connected with Stanley Power. I was unable to verify the details, so they need not be quoted here.

At a sitting on January 22, 1926, the medium said as below :

“Do you know someone called Power, a young man, who went quickly. Something was done to him by a doctor. There is someone grieving about him very much. Some of your friends have brought him. You have been in touch with someone who knows him.”

It will be noted that Power is here said to have died quickly, whereas on July 28, 1925, he was stated to have had a long illness. These statements would be reconcilable if Power had a long illness, then an operation, death following soon afterwards. As to my having been in touch with someone who knew Power, it happens that I was at a Rotary luncheon on July 24, 1925, four days before the first appearance of the communicator. No one named Power was at the luncheon, but it is possible enough that some relative was there.

On July 8, 1927, among other things, the

medium said, "Do you know a young man who died suddenly, named Stanley?" And on August 24, 1928, the medium said as below :

"Some young man is behind me ; he has touched me. This young man behind me is Stanley. Do you know him?"

(J. A. H : "He has been before, but I cannot trace him.")

"This young man behind—have you a friend called Power? Some young man who wants to get a message to his mother. You have been in contact with someone at a big house, all men there, no ladies. The young man got in touch with you there."

Up to this point, the whole thing had been completely mysterious. But on September 3, 1928, I saw in a newspaper a memorial notice concerning a Stanley Power, who had died September 3, 1922. I made inquiries, and found that he had had a long illness, then an operation, dying soon afterwards. His age was twenty-three, and the descriptions in the sittings were correct. I learnt that his mother was grieving excessively ; in fact I was told that she was "dying of a broken heart." I was anxious, naturally, to get in touch with Stanley's parents, in the hope

that some consolation might be given ; for I have found, in other cases, that there is great comfort in the assurance that their boy is not lost to them, but still exists and loves them. But it was a difficult matter. I wrote to the Vicar who had conducted Power's funeral service, and he replied on a postcard, that he had received my letter and might write later on. But he never did. Then I risked writing to the father, but I received no reply ; probably the subject was distasteful to him. However, the mother's grief was not to be long. She died on February 15, 1929, and at one of my sittings she appeared, along with Stanley, happily united once more. I quote below from my verbatim report of the sitting of November 14, 1929.

"Young man is here, tall, twenty-five or twenty-six, smartly built ; been in spirit some time. Nearer to you" (J. A. H.) "than to you" (M. H.). "Power. Someone has gone over, and the young man is grateful to you. The tension has now lapsed. He is joined by someone who has been anxious to meet him."

On the scientific side, this case is specially important. The facts cannot be explained

by telepathy from the sitters. The knowledge shown was not possessed by anyone present. We had never heard of Stanley Power. Nor had we ever had anyone in the house, so far as I am aware, who did know the facts. Wilkinson had never met the Powers ; they are not Spiritualists, or interested in Spiritualism—very much the contrary. And telepathy from distant and unknown minds seems to me a wild hypothesis in this kind of case. I dismiss ordinary fraud, for I knew Wilkinson for twenty years, and never found him out in any deviation from complete honesty and indeed exceptional high-mindedness. There remains the hypothesis that the communicator was the boy himself. This I accept. It seems to me the most reasonable explanation of the facts.

CHAPTER XI

DR. GREEN

SOMETHING over ten years ago, I became acquainted with a medical man, Dr. Green, who was interested in psychical research, though he had had no personal experience. He lived about thirty miles from my home, and I knew practically nothing about him, so the conditions were good ; I mean that if I had Wilkinson to meet him, there was a good chance that something would happen which could not be explained by the supposition that I had primed the medium with the necessary knowledge. Accordingly I asked Dr. and Mrs. Green for a sitting. They were introduced anonymously, and no indication was given as to where they lived. I will extract some portions from my report. They were good sitters, and gave nothing away. In explanation of a remark made later on, I may mention that Dr. Green's hearing is not good.

August 2, 1923. To Dr. G. :

“There is some man with you, big in bulk, but not tall. Full, heavy features, whiskers full at the chin, but not much about the upper lip, deep brow, hair thin at the front, and whitish. Stands looking at you, intent on you. Waistcoat open at top of front, not just the style of to-day. Long coat, looks reflectively at you. When he passed away he would be sixty-nine or seventy. He went about very steadily, would weigh things up ; shrewd, tactful, a slow speaker, seems intent on you, as if it were long since he saw you. I have a feeling of Glasgow with you ; perhaps you are going to have business there, I do not know. I get an initial B over your head, an initial of somebody. This man used to do something, had a profession that made him very well known. He has been passed over some years. He passed away very suddenly. Very active man, keen in the mind.”

This was correct, of a professor whom Dr. Green had known, and there was a special association with Glasgow. In a later sitting this medical man appeared again, saying : “I have thrown my mantle over you.” It

happens to be the case that the professor's speciality is also that of Dr. Green, so the remark was very appropriate.

To Mrs. G. :

“ Have you been exercised in your mind over a school ? I feel as if I had to say ‘ Keep out of it.’ There is a man with you who used to have something to do with a lodge ; I see regalia of a very high order. I see all the—shall I say—regimentals. Good-looking man, sixty or so, fresh high colour, died very quickly, had not been ailing. He had received some compliment that had greatly pleased him, and he passed away soon after. He is holding his hand out as if he would grasp your hand, in friendly greeting. A very good-looking man, moderately good head of hair, thick neck, well groomed. Someone you have known and who has known you. He was something like a mayor, or something connected with civic work.”

This was Mrs. Green's father. The description is correct. He was made an alderman, and he died suddenly, as said, in September, 1918. This was repeated, “ tragic suddenness, but not killed,” and so on. The fact was that he had died of angina pectoris.

A good deal more was said about the professor and about Mrs. Green's father, but the above will serve for illustration ; Dr. and Mrs. Green were satisfied that the details were too numerous and exact to be attributable to chance, and they agreed that I could not have supplied the medium with the facts, for I knew nothing of the relatives or the early life of either of them. After careful study of the report Dr. Green remarked that the facts were "startlingly true."

January 22, 1926.

Dr. and Mrs. Green were not present ; the sitters were myself and sister.

"There is a girl about eighteen, moving about here ; tall enough for a woman, frail and lean. I get no feeling of weakness. Long hair, rather fair. Pointed features. Shortish dress, lightly made. Someone must have been here she was interested in. Nice-looking girl." (Writes something on pad, and reads it out.) "Celia. Have you had someone here not long ago who has been discussing a girl ?

"I can see a woman looking at that work-basket ; an old woman with a black silk dress, with lace round her neck. Not as tall

as you " (M. H.), "rather wavy hair. A nice face. She is as real as life to me."

(Trance comes on.)

"There is a Mary Cole. You have not heard of her? You will find that it will have a bearing on some friend; it has to do with the girl whose name was written on the paper. The girl is the child of a friend of yours. You have a friend who is unable to hear; a man. This man has a girl, and she is after dancing. She does not tarry about here; some distance away. Put that down; Cole; it is a lady who is trying to communicate with this deaf man. She suffered pain and she is anxious that this man should know that she is quite well now. There is someone connected with this girl called Green. The girl is in the body, moving about. I think that the lady Green was called Cole."

At this time Wilkinson was still ignorant of the identity of the Greens. We ourselves—my sister and I—did not know Mrs. Green's name before marriage, or anything about her relatives. We knew that the Greens had a daughter, but did not know her name. On inquiry we learnt that Mrs. Green's name before marriage was Cole, and that her paternal grandmother deceased, was

Mary Cole. Further, that the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Green was named Celia, and that she was particularly fond of dancing—not merely ordinary ballroom dancing but she also did solo dancing, of quite professional quality.

On another occasion, Wilkinson said that he got the name "Hessie." Anyhow, this was what it sounded like, and I wrote it thus in my shorthand notes. I thought it was probably some diminutive of a girl's name. Mrs. Green said she recognised it, but said no more. Along with this "Hessie" the medium described a farmhouse, with cobbled yard, a man who had had an accident to his foot, and all sorts of details about him and the house. Afterwards, Mrs. Green told me that the man was her father, the farm was her old home in the East Riding of Yorkshire, and that what the medium had said was not "Hessie" but "Hessay," which was the name of the village in which the farm was situated.

There was another case in which Wilkinson gave to Dr. and Mrs. Green some communications from two young men, who gave the word "Hall," which the medium thought was part of the name of a house. But it

turned out to be the name of the young men, whose Christian names were obtained clair-audiently, later. They gave their names and regiment, their ages, and referred to a memorial, which was described correctly. They said that their mother was still grieving bitterly, and wished to give her some consolation. Part of this was known to the Greens, but not all ; they knew some people named Hall, who had lost two sons recently, but some of the other details had to be inquired about. They turned out true. Mrs. Green risked asking Mrs. Hall to call, and told her what had come through ; and it was a comfort and help to her. This is something like the Stanley Power case which I described in my last chapter, but it was more successful in its outcome, for the bereaved people were not hostile to psychical things.

I could quote many other incidents which occurred in these Wilkinson sittings, connected with Dr. and Mrs. Green, but space forbids. As I have said, the conditions, particularly at first, were specially good, for Dr. and Mrs. Green lived in a distant town, and I am sure that they were quite unknown to the medium. After the first few sittings,

which were at my own home, we thought there might be still better results if the medium were to sit at Dr. Green's home, so I took him there, and good evidential results were obtained. After that, it was to be assumed that he knew who they were, and indeed I told him the names of the sitters. But quite enough had been obtained before their identity was disclosed, to satisfy all of us that some sort of supernormal perception must be assumed ; and also it was obvious that this went beyond telepathy from the sitters. It seemed, and seems, more reasonable to accept the communications as coming from the other side, which is what was stated to be the case.

It will be noted that in one sitting there was a description of a living girl, Celia Green, the daughter of my friend Dr. Green. At first, Wilkinson apparently thought that she was a departed spirit, though soon afterwards he realised somehow that she was still in the body. This is puzzling. How did it come about that her form was seen ? Even on an astral body theory, why should her astral body be wandering about in our house, for Wilkinson to see ? The old woman, Mary Cole, whom Wilkinson also saw, was on the

other side, and she was Celia's great-grandmother ; we can understand that she might come and give us something evidential, for we knew her granddaughter, Mrs. Green. But this apparition of Celia is a puzzle. The sitting was held during the day, and I do not suppose that Celia was asleep. There is some evidence to show that in sleep there is some dislocation which permits the form of the sleeper to be seen elsewhere by suitably endowed people, but the hypothesis is not applicable in this case, though I wish I had made sure whether Celia was awake or asleep at the time of the medium's statements. Perhaps the living and the dead are really more closely in touch than we think, and perhaps Mrs. Cole could in some sense bring her great-granddaughter, though the latter was what we call alive.

Another guess may, however, be hazarded. These forms seen by clairvoyants are not spirits but manifestations of spirits. They are perhaps something half-way between matter and mind. And if the form of Mrs. Cole is something built up by her mind in order to be seen, perhaps she could similarly build up the form of her living great-granddaughter. All this is merely guess-

work, and it would introduce complications which need not be discussed here. We do not yet really understand these phenomena.

But the certain thing is, that the medium saw forms which in a sense reproduced the earth bodies of people he had never known or heard of, also getting their names ; and that these people, in the present case, were relatives or friends of Dr. or Mrs. Green. And some of the things happened when Dr. and Mrs. Green were not present, so telepathy from the sitters seems to be unacceptable. Dr. Green, who is an M.D. and a biologist, finds telepathy of any kind a difficult explanation, and thinks that the spiritualistic interpretation is more reasonable and scientific.

It is perhaps worth while to say here that until Dr. Green became acquainted with psychical evidence, he was what may be called an open-minded agnostic, as to individual survival and religion generally.

CHAPTER XII

ANOTHER CASE AGAINST TELEPATHY : GEORGE VILLIERS

IN this book I am quoting cases which have as their special feature the elimination of the hypothesis of telepathy from anyone present. The sceptic will say that I may have known the facts and forgotten them. Naturally it is difficult or impossible to prove the contrary in knock-down fashion ; indeed I cannot give in detail, for lack of space, all the reasons which make me so sure that the facts had never been known to me. But I am quite sure that it was so. I am as certain as I am of anything, that I had never known the name before marriage of the Mrs. Green of the last chapter, or anything about her early life in East Yorkshire. Dr. and Mrs. Green confirm me in this. They had purposely refrained from talking about their history or their affairs to me, and they say that no one in their present surroundings

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could have told me the facts in question. Similarly with practically all the facts in this series. The next case is short, but is confirmatory of my firm belief that telepathy from those present is not an adequate explanation of what happened.

It is perhaps unnecessary to say much about the fraud theory. All reasonable investigators think of this first, and are careful to exclude it before allowing themselves to be driven into other and supernormal hypotheses. I adopted it provisionally, and held to it until the facts drove me further. I cannot prove to the sceptic that Wilkinson did not hunt up the facts given, employing detectives and going to considerable expense in order to get up good cases. I say I cannot prove it to the sceptic, but I am quite sure that the medium did not do these things. Some of the facts could not, I believe, have been obtained even with the help of clever detectives. And it is to be remembered that Wilkinson would never charge me a fee ; I usually persuaded him to accept something, but it was a nominal amount. In the first years it was about two shillings, which left a few pence after he had paid his railway fare. In later years he would sometimes accept ten shillings. When

he failed to get any clairvoyance, he refused to accept a penny. If he employed detectives, he must have been badly out of pocket. But to anyone who knew him, the idea of fraud is absurd. One cannot know a man for twenty years without knowing whether he is honest or a rogue. Wilkinson was an honest man.

In the next case I quote the medium's exact words, as before ; copying from my verbatim reports.

July 8, 1927.

Present, J. A. H. and sister.

"There is a woman with a veil over her face, someone must have brought her. Fifty-five or fifty-six, stylish, low neck, not been gone long, must have suffered rather severely. Someone with her. She has not been before. Gracie, Grace. She must have lived at a rather big house. She must have had something very troublesome, and I do not think she wanted to go. I don't think she has been gone a year. She would be rather proud, would display a kind of dignity. Was she very fond of a horse? Interested in a pet horse or something. Do you know someone called Villiers?"

All this was perfectly recognised by both sitters. We had known a Mrs. Villiers whose name was Grace. Wilkinson often used the word "proud" when he meant only dignified, and this latter adjective was appropriate.

September 29, 1927.

Present, J. A. H. and sister, with two friends from America.

After reference to the affairs of our visitors, the medium said: "Have you known a Grace? Passed away not very old. Wants to reach someone at Bromley. Very beautiful thing round her neck, kind of jewel on a string. She was in a rather good social scale, I should think. A woman, Grace Villiers. She is anxious about something at Bromley. She craves just your interest."

Bromley (pseudonym) was where she had lived.

December 23, 1927.

"There is some woman who dressed very handsomely. Not very old. She was well off, by her dress. Grace. Do you know her? Is she a relative?" (No, only an acquaintance.) "Did she live at Bromley? She wants to get a message to a man called

Henry. Had she someone belonging to her called Janet ? ”

Janet was the mother of Mrs. Villiers. Rather curiously, she had appeared at some of my sittings, years before. Perhaps the family had unusual power of communication. They were certainly very intelligent people, of good education. Henry is the name of Mr. Villiers.

August 10, 1928.

“ There is a middle-aged woman here, smart, well-dressed, name Grace. She has a beautiful young woman with her. Both belonged to a man named Henry. This young woman has been passed away a long time. Her name is Phyllis. She belongs to Grace and to Henry. Did you know anyone called Lew ? ” (No.) “ There is something interesting about this young woman Phyllis. Been gone a long time. Belongs to Henry and Grace.

“ Henry is in the body, and this is the only means by which they can approach.”

We had no knowledge that Henry and Grace had had a daughter. Nor was the name Lew known to us.

August 31, 1928.

"A lady who comes habitually. She is persistently seeking to get to her ain folk." (The Scots control was speaking.) "Dignified. Name, Grace. She had a girl she is anxious to bring forward ; a girl who passed away as a child. Phyllis is Grace's daughter and the daughter of a Henry. Died very young ; preceded her many years. They are together now ; the child is linked up with her again. Did you know that ?" (No, we did not know that they had a daughter.) "There is a Henry in the body, to do with this, a man you would have to use cunning with, to get the information. He would not be easy to talk to about it."

This was very true. I knew that Mr. Villiers would be difficult to approach, and I had no right to intrude on his privacy. But I was so anxious to know about the "Phyllis" that I took the risk, and wrote to him. He consented to see me, and I called, reading out to him my records of the sittings. He was courteous, though the subject was distasteful to him. He said that they had had a daughter named Phyllis, who died when only a few days old, in 1899. He told me

also that he had had a half-brother whose surname was Lew. I had thought that this was probably an abbreviation for Lewis, for I had not heard the name of Lew before, as a surname.

There was other matter in these sittings which I prefer not to give, even under pseudonyms, for it is just possible that the disguises might be penetrated. But there were references to family matters of a private kind, which went beyond our knowledge but which turned out true. Mr. Villiers said he supposed that the medium had obtained the knowledge by inquiry, but he was friendly and open-minded, and asked me to let him know if anything further came. Nothing further did come, however. It seemed that when Mrs. Villiers had got her message through, giving evidence to her husband of her survival and of her continued interest in her family, her object had been attained.

CHAPTER XIII

A CURIOUS RECOGNITION

HITHERTO I have been dealing with Wilkinson, but I have had many sittings with other mediums in London and elsewhere. I will now quote from my reports of some sittings with Mrs. Leonard which contained a certain amount of interesting matter. My first sitting with Mrs. Leonard was on May 15, 1924, at her home in Barnet. It had been arranged in a carefully roundabout way, so that Mrs. Leonard should not know who I was. Sir Oliver Lodge's Birmingham secretary, Miss Walker, had done the necessary correspondence, and this, of course, did not give any indication of the sitter's identity or locality, for Miss Walker was sending people to the medium from all parts of the country. The sitting was not a good one; it contained a large amount of unverifiable matter—descriptions of people whom I did not recognise, and so

on. But something or someone certainly knew me or at least knew who I was, as will be seen. I will quote verbatim from my notes as usual. Fedra is Mrs. Leonard's trance-control.

Fedra : " Hill, Hill, Hill, I keep getting a name, Hill. A lady keeps saying it. Place or person. Person. . . . Are you going to have Wilkie, Wilkie, Wilkie . . . no, Wilkinson? Are you going to see Wilkinson? Raymond keeps jumping about and trying to help. I have told him not to talk ; he says he wants to come, for he does know you in a way, and in your own kind of way you are substantiating Father's work to a great extent ; so I am always interested in anyone for that reason alone, though it is perhaps more personal in your case."

(Whispering, as the trance ended) " Yorkshire, up in hills."

There was also a reference to Tom Tyrrell—a Lancashire medium with whom I had had sittings, and a few other things which added to the proof that I was recognised. It is curious that there was no really good evidence of the identity of the communicator who apparently recognised me.

The possibility of the recognition being the work of Mrs. Leonard's subliminal is, of course, not quite excluded. I had never seen her before, and I have no reason to believe that she had ever seen me. After the sitting I asked her whether she had any idea who I was. She said, with a smile, that she had no knowledge of my identity, but that her husband—who had shown me in—had remarked that he thought I was Mr. Cyril Maude! But though she had no conscious knowledge of me, it is just possible that she had seen some photograph of me. This, however, is an unsatisfactory supposition as explanation of the recognition, for in any photograph that she could have seen I was wearing a moustache, which I had shaved off not long before the sitting. It is just possible that I was recognised, but on the whole it seems more likely that someone who knew me was there, on the other side, but was not able to get anything through about himself, or at least not enough to identify himself. There were many descriptions of spirits said to be present, but they were not very specific, and there were very few names given, these being mostly unrecognised. "Raymond" is no doubt Raymond Lodge.

I was closely associated with Sir Oliver in psychical matters.

Before quoting the next case I must make some introductory comments. It is what has been called a "compact" case. Many people have left sealed envelopes containing some word or sentence known only to themselves, and in a few cases the contents have been successfully given through a medium, after the death of the writer thereof. A friend of mine wished to try this, and when she was dying she wrote something on a sheet of paper, sealed it up in an envelope and sent the envelope to me. In sittings with Wilkinson during ensuing years there were many things which were characteristic of her, but without any name, so I did not open the envelope. I kept it unopened for ten years. Then, in a sitting with Mrs. Leonard, there were strong indications of her presence ; I will quote some of the things that were said.

May 9, 1925.

FEDA : " Do you remember at last sitting with Feda, a lady came ; not an old lady, just middle-aged. M M M M M. Not a relative, only a friend. Talked about

Spiritualism when here. Good deal of power. Said she would come back. Coming about a promise. Did not think she was going very soon ; internal trouble. Operation been talked about, no good. Kind of growth. Some power herself, quite psychic. Nice woman. Could see humorous side of things. Letters. She thinks you might have one or two letters ; pleased you have got them. She has been gone a few years. One letter particularly mentions about this subject, and words to the effect that she promised to come back. A grateful letter, ends up rather specially so. M. Letter B has to do with her also. Not close to the M, but connected with her. Not her actual name, she says ; a place, B. Can't get it, leave it a while. Even on earth she wondered if you might pass over before her, and tried to help you. Not many on earth to communicate with ; got relatives who don't intend to know, not drawn to it. Flowers in connexion with her specially. Flowers a link between you and her. You ought to have been reminded of her lately. Experiment we hoped to carry out, but could not before she passed over. Tried to come through W., but an old lady guide insisted on talking."

May 11, 1925.

FEDA : "Tried to get to you in a round-about way, a long time ago. You couldn't come to have a sitting ; anxious to get a message through, to show that she had not forgotten. You sent something to hold, to help to link up. Just got an indication through. Referred to promise and initials, and spoke about your state of health, which was rather bad just then. Through K. Paul. Soon after, I knew you were going to be better. I didn't worry, because the guides assured me you were expected to recover to the extent of doing ordinary things."

All this was applicable to the communicator in question. We had a compact that the one to go first should communicate ; she herself was markedly psychic, and had had some remarkable experiences ; and flowers were an identifying feature. She sent me flowers frequently, during several years when I was an invalid, in bed. Of course, many others sent occasional flowers, but she was the friend who sent most frequently—in fact, was the only friend who sent regularly. When the five M's were spoken, I thought it

was only an attempt at the surname ; but when I opened the sealed envelope I found the word "Mem," with a short sentence referring to it. I had sometimes addressed her as Mem, those letters being the initials of her name, and the word being familiar to Anglo-Indians in "mem-sahib," etc. The five M's spoken rapidly, one after the other, made the sound of "Mem," repeated, though it had not occurred to me at the time. She had died in November, 1915, and I had almost forgotten that I had used that form of address. Indeed I had not thought of her often, for many years, not being in touch with her relatives or friends. As to the last point, it is correct that I had tried to get communications long before, by sending a glove for the medium to hold ; the glove being taken by a friend whose name began with K and whose deceased son was Paul. Evidently this was remembered, and that she got part of her name through.

The B perhaps refers to Bromsgrove, where she lived and died.

I should not regard this case, standing alone, as proof positive. The sealed letter test is not conclusive ; the contents may have been read clairvoyantly, or may have been

communicated telepathically to someone, before the death of the writer of them. I agree that this is far-fetched, but we have to take it into account. And all the other things said were known to me, though I had not thought of them for some time. But the evidence is nevertheless impressive to me. Knowledge was shown which was characteristic of M. E. M. The references to flowers, to a compact, to a place beginning with B, to the effort I had made by proxy, when I sent a glove by a sitter whose name began with K, and above all, Em em em em—these things have a cumulative force which makes the spiritistic interpretation seem to me reasonable. Moreover, as I have said, I had had many things through Wilkinson which, though they did not prove the agency of the communicator, did at least strongly suggest it. Accordingly I provisionally accept the communications as authentic.

CHAPTER XIV

A MESSAGE CONFIRMED THROUGH ANOTHER MEDIUM

THE chief interest of the evidence to be described in this chapter is that it was received through two different mediums, one in Bradford and the other in London. They did not know each other, in fact they had never met. And the curious thing is that I was not successful in verifying the evidence that was given. That is partly why I am describing it now ; it may be that some reader will be able to give me the required information concerning the man who was mentioned through the two mediums. As introductory explanation I will say merely that in 1923 there died a near relative of mine, who gave me fully identifying evidence at many of my sittings with Wilkinson in the succeeding years. I will quote from my verbatim reports, as usual.

May 7, 1924.

Medium, A. Wilkinson.

"A man named Slater is here. He comes from Martin Top. Top of a hill where there is a kirk. Someone has brought him here for some purpose. Rather hearty manner, not polished, but quite a good sort. This man seems linked up with some influence, and quite probably there will be some sequence to it.

"There is some gentleman with a white beard, very white hair, used to preach the Gospel, name William. . . . Used to preach without much reward. I think he did not follow it as a profession." (Uncertain whether this man is the same as the Slater of the last paragraph or not.)

May 16, 1924.

Medium, Mrs. Leonard.

(After references to my relative :) "Do you know there was a place he was interested in? Not been able to go for some time before he passed over. Public place. That building was a kind of centre. People were attracted to it who did not live near it, a

place that did good. Little booklets I see. Sent them out M A R . . . M A R T I N Consonant T Martin T. Not Tin, but a bit like it. S keeps coming in his mind in connexion with it, but he keeps pushing it out. It is a T sound, nearly O. Try again. T o p. Enough to show you what he means. An S name that comes in, not a short name, starting with S. L A T E. Slater. Met someone. Made him think of someone he has met on the other side. A rather elderly man he was fond of. Passed over. Rather a full grey beard, almost white. Fine, good-looking man. Strong, firm, good face. Picture he had on earth of him. Met him again now. . . ."

When the trance ended there was the usual whispering, but the only distinguishable word was "Slater." I was leaning forward, with my ear near Mrs. L.'s mouth, to catch everything, and the whispering seemed to be in the throat, rather than through the lips, but this might be an illusion. Anyhow the word "Slater" was very plainly said, with a kind of eagerness, as if it were of special importance.

May 9, 1925.

Medium, Mrs. Leonard.

"Martin. Gave it last time. Martin S."

(J. A. H. He gave the name Slater before, but we cannot find him.)

"Same one, trying to get now. Elderly man, not young. F. Something to do with a place or number. Four, four. He shakes his head, and says No, not a number. Place. Four. Near finding him on a clue, which didn't lead to him, but very near. On right track. If you had just gone up another turning, metaphorically, you would have traced it. Have you been looking in a book with names in, turning it over, come across the name in a fat book, not a new book, an old one. May not be in your house. He shows me. Going to find the book that contains the particulars, in a place not very close to your house ; another village or town. More stone than brick. Seems to be part of it inside very dark. Hall or entrance place, two doors opposite each other, one left and one right. Feel you going to the left. This book would be by itself, or in such a position not to have to worry about it ; it would be almost placed in your hands. Spoken about

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this name through another medium. Four, not a number. Seem to get a feeling of going back to some time ago ; old feeling with it. He feels certain ; he smiled then. One place this man had lived in was a narrow street, one end of it very narrow, dark coloured houses, some of them shops in lower part, little windows, not comfortable, pretty places ; ugly. Is there a works there too ? Going up narrow part. I hear something going Thump. I see a tall chimney ; feel it is like a factory. He nods his head ; ‘quite right.’ Man was very much connected with when here. Letter L over the place. He says he thinks you are going to discover this suddenly, not just yet, he wants to get two or three things through first. May be kept back a bit, till more built up about it. Founder, as if he founded something. Slater founded it. Do you know that he ” (my relative’s name was correctly given here) “tried to give you something about same person through Wilkie ? ”

In a sitting with Mrs. Leonard on May 11, 1925, there were further references to Slater, who was said to have been connected with a small religious body, and with foreign places, the suggestion being that it was missionary

work, but that was only my interpretation. Also there was a reference to Leyburn. It was said that Slater passed over before my relative.

In further sittings with Wilkinson there were references to Slater, and attempts seemed to be made to clear the matter up, but the effort seemed to lead to confusion. But it was said that there was definite purpose behind it all, and it appeared to have some connexion with Martin Top, though what that connexion was, I could not make out. In one of the Leonard sittings it was said that "Brown" was also connected, and would be found to be important. This also was unrecognised.

As regards evidentiality, the facts are as follows : My relative, whom I will call F., was interested in many small Congregational churches in the Yorkshire dales, visiting them from time to time, and helping them in various ways. The one in which he took most interest was Martin Top—a small chapel not far from Clitheroe. It stands alone except for a caretaker's house ; there is no village, but the chapel serves the surrounding country where there are isolated farms. The chapel was well described in a

sitting which I have not had space to quote. I asked Wilkinson, after one of the sittings, whether the words "Martin Top" meant anything to him, and he said he had never heard them before. This place was so much in F.'s mind that it is quite in accordance with what I should expect, to find references to it in the communications. It is specially interesting to get the same reference through two mediums who were unknown to each other. But the queer thing is that I cannot trace the man Slater, although he also was mentioned by the two mediums. I have made exhaustive inquiries round Martin Top, and am sure that no Mr. Slater has lived there for a long time, if ever. There are some Slaters a few miles away, but they were not known to F., so far as I can make out. If any reader of this book, living perhaps in Burnley or thereabouts, happens to know of a Mr. Slater who died about 1923 and had been in the habit of visiting Martin Top, I should very much like to hear. My belief is that F. had engineered a particularly good piece of evidence, which should exclude any hypothesis of telepathy from my mind ; but his test has been too ingenious. He apparently said to himself : "There ! he can't

say that he knew anything about this ! ” But it seems that very few people did know about his acquaintance with Slater, and accordingly I found it difficult to verify. I feel sure that the messages were genuine, and that a special effort was made over this one. It would furnish really remarkable evidence if I could find, after all these years, that F. did know a Mr. Slater in connexion with Martin Top. As I have said, there was no Mr. Slater at the place itself, and the people there do not remember even any visitor of that name ; but I suspect that there was a Mr. Slater who had some slight connexion with it in some way, perhaps preaching there as a supply, and either meeting F. there, or having some acquaintance with him.

CHAPTER XV

CONFUSION CASES

I SOMETIMES think that we may learn more from little points which are not at present understood, than from the evidence which is perfectly plain. Certainly it is very desirable to study with care anything which is not understood, in case it may provide a clue to the method of communication or some other matter. In this chapter I quote from sittings in which there was obvious confusion, and the question is, how is the particular confusion to be explained? I feel that there is something important here, if I could only see a little further. Perhaps some reader will have an inspiration that will help.

A. Wilkinson.

May 22, 1925.

Present, J. A. H. and M. H. (sister).

Medium said at the very beginning of the sitting :

“ I am faintly conscious of some man by the door. Someone is ushering him in ; an elderly man. He seemed to follow you ” (M. H.) “ into the room. Not really fully awake to consciousness or bearings. Not long been passed over. As if someone was helping him forward. Has someone died next door ? I get an impression of next door ” (pointing west). “ Can’t see the man, but feel his presence. Someone with him, pushing him forward. Henry. No relation. Whoever he is, he is not fully detached from his physical environment. Well, there’s a woman in front of him, shorter than him ; she has reared herself up in front of him. Not as old as him, but elderly, oval features, quite grey, been passed over longer than the man. Not sure if Brooks is connected with this. Curious. Feel as if I have to say, Next door. Brooks. Some purpose in that man being brought here.

“ There’s a Henry, just wakened up. Houses above you.”

Wilkinson.

May 14, 1926.

“There is somebody here called Brooksbank. Was his name William? Did he know your brother? There is quite a group together. This Brooksbank would be oldish, and would hold rather strong opinions. Rather positive. Did your brother live at James Street?”

Wilkinson.

November 26, 1926.

“Have you known an oldish woman, about seventy, nicely built, good-looking, grey hair, pretty full and smooth, oval face, fairly long dress, but not old-fashioned. Not long gone. Suffered rather severely. Mary. Mary Banks. Do you know her? Have you had to do with Liberals?” (Yes.) “That woman was real; I could see her face clearly. I think she and her husband died rather near together—not long between them. Did you know a Mary Brooksbank? Had she a husband who died about the same time, and were they Liberals?”

Wilkinson.

December 23, 1927.

“There is a man called William Brooksbank, and a coterie of old friends. Alfred Booth. Must have known each other.”

The facts are as follows : William Brooksbank had been well known to me in life. He died in April, 1925. He was an ardent Liberal. His wife had predeceased him, but not by a long period. He died at a house a few hundred yards west of ours. Earlier on, he had lived in a house fronting James Street. My brother lived not far away and part of James Street belonged to him, so the mention of this street is appropriate for both. Mrs. Brooksbank's name, however, turned out to be not Mary, though a rather similar one. But the interesting thing about these sittings is not the evidential parts, but the mention of a Henry Brooks. It was said that there was a next-door connexion. There was a Henry Brooke, who had been in partnership with my next-door neighbour. I had not known him. Why this mention of Henry Brooke, when obviously the supposed communicator was William Brooksbank ?

There is a story, probably mythical, for

Darwin was not musical, that Charles Darwin performed what he called fool experiments, such as playing the trombone to his plants, in order to see whether their rate of growth was influenced. Perhaps it is legitimate to evolve fool hypotheses, as for instance :

My friend William Brooksbank becomes aware that it is possible to communicate with me, and telephones to the Wilkinson band of spirits that he would like to call in. They wait for a suitable opportunity, and then ring up Heaven that they are ready for Brooksbank. But there is confusion on the wires, and the name goes through as Brooks. This is heard by, or communicated to Henry Brooke, who says, Yes, that is for me, I know Claremont, Thornton. He comes, but finds it is not the right house ; indicates that his interests are next door, and that his name is Henry Brooke. He retires, tells them to repeat the call, and Brooksbank is successfully put through or brought.

Dr. L. P. Jacks once had a similar experience, which he described in an article entitled "Adventures in Psychical Research," published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for August, 1919. In the sitting which he quotes there was some confusion between two people

named Scott (pseudonym). Now Dr. Jacks had known an elderly man named Scott—known him intimately—who was a literary man and something of a poet. Some of the communications were evidential of the identity of this man. But there also appeared a communicator who seemed to be the young Scott, who also was a literary man and poet, but who was not personally known to Dr. Jacks. Why this confusion, which was almost exactly the sort of thing that occurred in my own sittings? There is something to be learnt here. I wish I could learn it !

This matter of names is always a difficult one. Many mediums give out names freely, but few or none of them are recognised ; perhaps they are thrown up by the subconscious, as names do come into our minds if we make them passive. It is a sort of dreaming. But names do come through from the other side sometimes. The method seems to vary with different mediums. Sometimes the spirit shows the control a picture, as when Mrs. Thompson's control, Nelly, saw a field with children playing in it, and guessed that the name wanted was Happy-field. The correct name was Merrifield. Sometimes the spirit shows the control some

letters which spell out the name, as in some of my sittings with Mrs. Leonard. With Wilkinson, names came for the most part clairaudiently—by some sort of inner hearing. Sometimes he would see them spelt out, but this was exceptional. He usually heard them spoken, and could sometimes say something characteristic of the person in question, e.g. “that name was said in a very gentle, feminine voice”; as a matter of fact this was characteristic of the spirit in question. And he was hardly ever wrong. More than any medium I have known, he seemed able to exclude the operation of his own mind. He never threw out long strings of names which were unrecognised; sometimes he got very few names in a sitting, but they were all recognised and correct, or correct enough for recognition. This always seems to me surprising, for in addition to the difficulties on this side there may be difficulties on the other. Memories get worse as we get older, and very old people almost forget their own names. However, perhaps discarnate people resume their memories when they reach the other side. Perhaps that is why their memories became bad in their later years; the recollections had preceded them. Anyhow, I think

that there is some reason for that confusion both in my case and that of Dr. Jacks ; and if we could only discover that reason, it might shed much light on the process of communication. And any increase of knowledge concerning the process would enable us to make communication easier, by providing better conditions.

CHAPTER XVI

AN ILLUSTRATIVE SITTING

IN the foregoing chapters I have dissected out of many sittings the incidents referring to this or that ostensible communicator. This makes each case much easier to follow, and it does not affect the evidential weight of the facts. But it is perhaps desirable to give a report of one sitting exactly as it was made, so that the reader knows precisely how the messages came. As will be seen, the medium would get something for one sitter, then turn to another and get something for him. Apparently this is the best method. It reminds one of the well-known fact that, when trying to remember a name, it is best to think of something else; then, turning back to the original quest, the name will often come. Certainly this change of direction seemed to help Wilkinson to obtain his super-normal information, whatever its source.

SITTING WITH WILKINSON, *Friday*,
19 *August*, 1927.

Present, Dr. and Mrs. Green, M. H.,
J. A. H. (note-taker), and medium.

Wilkinson began to get impressions quickly
after tea.

To Mrs. G. :

"I smell a farm with you ; a mistal and farm. There is a man who was always in that line, farming. Have you known someone called Essie?" (or Hessie ; I thought it was perhaps an abbreviation of Hester. J. A. H.). "That name has to do with this farm. Quite flat ; fields. I can't see any road ; all fields. I am going into this farm. The man looks like a labourer, rather broad, thick-set. Not very tall. Leans a bit. Kind of labouring man on the farm, rather than the owner. He was about this place a lot ; did menial work, big leather boots. I get Hessie to do with this farm.

"There is a woman, not very tall but plump ; nice oval features, not lined, though she is up in years, not very old but older than you. Nicely made. Dark dress. Has had

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to do with this farm. When you were a girl, perhaps you were at a farm."

(Mrs. G. informed me afterwards, aside, that she lived on a farm at Hessay when she was a girl ; was married from there. The man is her father, who wore old clothes and clogs when walking in the fields, etc. I had never heard of Hessay before ; it is a small hamlet near York.)

To Dr. G. :

"Have you known an Alice ? It seemed to come from you. There is a very old man named William. Bigger than you. About eighty. He has a small bottle in his hand ; pills, perhaps. Unusually small. Before he passed away he would be aware of it ; ailing. I can't get any smell from the bottle. Tiny pills, I think. Strong personality. Vigorous mind."

To J. A. H. :

"Man over here with a beard, big nose, never seen him before. Beard short at the sides, longer at the chin. Not more than fifty-two. May have been somewhat of an invalid. Lot of papers with him, and writing. He is over there (by the gramophone). He

must have been a writer. You notice this, he had a striking nose. Not a big man. Lot of papers and books. Do you know a William Sharp ? ”

J. A. H. : “ Yes, but I never met him.”

A. W. : “ Not recently passed away.”

To Mrs. G. :

“ There is a Mary with you, bringing violets. May have been fond of violets.”

To J. A. H. :

“ This man has been gone a while. There is some purpose in his coming here : some interest or attraction. Something about dreams. Was this man interested in dreams ? I have to say something about the dominion of dreams. I feel that he has made an attempt before.”

To Dr. G. :

“ Have you a book about dreams ? The dominion of dreams.”

Dr. G. : “ Yes.” (Thinking of Olive Schreiner’s *Dreams*.) “ Something about dreams. This man is pointing with his finger at a book. Have you known someone called McLeod ? That is Scotch. It is

something to do with that man, but it is all mixed up. Do you have dreams sometimes?"

Dr. G. : " Yes, sometimes."

A. W. : " He is wanting to prompt someone to do something ; he has some object in coming here. This McLeod is a woman, I think. I don't remember seeing that man before."

J. A. H. : " No, he hasn't been before."

To Mrs. G. :

" Have you known someone called Frances ? "

Mrs. G. : " I don't know."

A. W. : " It is someone that went to a Church where you went ; Church of England. Someone that has passed away. A woman."

(A. W. walks across to gramophone—he had been sitting by the window—and returns, saying to J. A. H. :)

" Have you been writing or discussing something about double personality ? "

J. A. H. : " Yes." (Nothing special, but I am preparing some MS. for a possible book, and one chapter is on the subconscious, with references to cases of multiple personality.)

A. W. : " Had this man a wife called Elizabeth ? He must have left her behind. He must have been passed over ten years or more."

J. A. H. : " Right." (I meant the period : I do not remember his wife's name, if I ever knew it.)

To Mrs. G. :

" Can you remember a man hurting his foot badly at a farm, and it caused quite a lot of worry ? Someone wants to bring the incident before you. A long time ago."

To Dr. G. :

" I have an impression of a very old woman, in the body. She wants to talk to you, wants to tell you something, something she has in her mind. Very old. It is about another man that she wants to tell you. If I were you, I should put myself in the way of seeing this woman ; not to ask her—she might not tell, then, but to give her the chance. She wants to tell you something."

To M. H. :

" There is a woman by you, not very old, pale, careworn, rather superior, refined,

dressed in dark clothes, going grey, but not as much as you—will you excuse me—she stands by you, and is looking at me. I have a flash from her that you have helped her. Have you known someone called Peter ? ”

M. H. : “ Yes.”

A. W. : “ She has to do with Peter. Not been gone long, three or four years. She has been brought to somebody.”

To Mrs. G. :

“ You are going to have some interesting news, not bad news, but interesting. Not perhaps just now, but it is coming. Have you been disquieted about your house ? I don’t think you need be troubled. You will have some interesting news.”

(Mrs. Green told us afterwards that they have been disquieted about the house, the owner having intimated that it was to be sold ; I think they received this intimation about a fortnight ago.)

To M. H. :

“ That woman was Hannah. Have you known someone called Brindle ? This woman is not old. She has rather unusual hair, not done on her brow, and she is rather haggard-

looking as if she had been very ill. Her name was Hannah.

"I can see your brother. He must know this woman. He stood up straight and looked at this woman and smiled as if he knew her. You must have helped her somehow."

To Mrs. G. :

"Have you known someone called Coles?"

Mrs. G. : "Very near."

A. W. : "This man, who was a farmer, thought a lot of you ; you were a pet of his."

(Mrs. G.—whose unmarried name was Cole, which Wilkinson got correctly at the sitting of January 22, 1926—says that she was her father's favourite daughter.)

To M. H. :

"H E P (spelling out). Initials ; to do with that woman."

J. A. H. : "Yes, we know who it is."

A. W. : "Did your brother have a friend called Barrett ? Did he go to a chapel ? He is trying to convey something about a man, and a young woman between thirty and forty. Barrett. Do you think they went to a chapel at Salem ? This young woman is rather nice-looking ; between thirty and

forty, not a long time passed over. This man Barrett has been longer away. Salem. An old woman living in the body belonging to this young woman. Your brother knows about this."

To Mrs. G. :

"You need not get exercised about your house. Someone prompts me to say this. Someone is looking on."

To M. H. :

"Barrett might have been a preacher, by his collar. The young woman has passed away since him."

(The Rev. E. R. Barrett was minister of Salem Congregational Chapel, Bradford, dying perhaps a dozen or fifteen years ago. He left several daughters, and one of them has died since, but I know no details, for the family left Bradford and I do not know where they are now. My brother knew and liked Mr. Barrett. He was a brother of Sir William Barrett.)

"That was your brother. I have not seen him stand up so straight before.

"Do you know a man called Alfred ? He has something to do with your brother. He

knows what Alfred is doing ; he is interested in what he is doing."

(Alfred is my brother's son.)

To J. A. H. :

"There is the writing man who came before. He has a woman with him called McLeod. He insists on it being a woman. Did he write poems ? "

J. A. H. : "Yes."

A. W. : "I see a lot of lines. He is anxious to get close to you. He says he knows David."

J. A. H. : "David what? Any other name ? "

A. W. : "David Gow. Seems as if he wants to get to him. I don't know who this man is, William Sharp ; I have never heard the name before."

To Mrs. G. :

"I feel something so bright and lively ; as if you were going to be invited somewhere."

To J. A. H. :

"Have you known a Thomas, an old gentleman, over seventy ? There is someone with him called Sarah."

J. A. H. : " This is interesting, I should like to get more."

A. W. : " He is groping about, as if he had not reached you before. Someone belonging to him perhaps passed over in the war."

(Thomas Hill died January 20, 1927. This is his first appearance. We think his wife, who predeceased him, was called Sarah or Sarah Ann. He was a distant relative of ours. He lost his only son tragically, about fifteen or twenty years ago ; perhaps this accounts for Wilkinson's guess that it was in the war.)

To Mrs. G. :

" I always feel that your husband will hear better. I don't say it just to buoy you up ; I really feel so."

To Dr. G. :

" Have you had to do with an old body called Liza ? "

To J. A. H. :

" Someone has helped Thomas to come. Must have been bothered with his breathing."

To M. H. :

“Your brother is very interested in something that someone called Alfred is doing.”

Here the trance came on with the Scots-woman in control.

“I hope it is not inconvenient for me to come. I want to speak about a gentleman whose friends have helped him to come here. You might write down this.” (Spells out) “F I O N A. This man is flashing letters ; P H A R A I S. You will have to find out at your leisure. He was a delicate man, ailing much with his back. He has been away twenty years. It seems as if his activities are being renewed ; seeking a channel by which he can have his thoughts expressed.”

(I did not remember the titles of any of Sharp's books, but I find that the first “Fiona McLeod” volume was *Pharais*, and a later one was *The Dominion of Dreams*. The books published by Sharp under the *nom de plume* of “Fiona McLeod” are very different in style from his own work—that is, from work published under his own name—and they were thought to be the work of a real person, a woman, for some time. I rather think that Sharp was never quite sure as to

whether he wrote them in a "secondary state" or whether some spirit woman inspired him. I see no reason for Sharp's appearance, except that we think alike about Emerson. He always carried a copy of the *Essays* wherever he went. But I never met him or corresponded with him, so far as I remember.

The incident is rather like the Luigi Vassallo affair, but in that case the Bubb connexion made the thing understandable. In this case there seems no reason for the appearance of Sharp, and I think it is the first time that someone has appeared without any apparent link. It seems almost more like a subliminal affair than genuine communication, though I have never thought heretofore that subliminal hypotheses applied well to Wilkinson's results.)

To M. H. :

"There is some lady who fraternised with you, named Lizzie. Not very old. She smiles."

(Lizzie Pickles, friend of M. H., often appears.)

To Mrs. G. :

“ There is a wee child with you, a kind of guardian spirit ; I see lines round you like a web. You are all from one tree.”

To M. H. :

“ Can you see this lady called Lizzie ? She catches gleams of former scenes. She has a young man with her, stands up quite straight, indicates that he is quite well.”

(Her brother, who had a long illness.)

To Mrs. G. :

“ I don't think you eat enough.” (Laughter on sitters' part.) “ You may take it as a joke, but if I were in your place I would eat a wee bit more.

“ I have come to clear the atmosphere. This man who is writing down, he knows a David and is anxious to give him a message and to co-operate with him.”

To Dr. G. :

“ Someone seeks to cast his mantle over you. A wee man. I hope it will stand you in good stead.”

Trance ends. Wilkinson says : " I don't think I can tell you any more. I didn't think of going under control."

In view of the sceptical supposition that Wilkinson primes himself with facts before a sitting, it is to be noted that he did not know he was going to meet the Greens. I was uncertain whether they would be able to come, and I had not told him that I had asked them.

Everything in this sitting was clearly recognised, but I have omitted verifications, this chapter being included ; mainly to show the method of reception how the medium changed his attention from sitter to sitter.

In the foregoing sitting, and in others, mention is made of my sister, M. H. It is perhaps necessary or at least desirable to say that she is of very critical mind, and has always been careful to give no information away to any medium with whom we might be sitting.

CHAPTER XVII

WILKINSON'S PERSONALITY AND POWERS

I NOW wish to put on record a few facts and impressions about the remarkable medium with whom this book is chiefly concerned.

Aaron Wilkinson lived, all his life, in or near Halifax, Yorkshire. As a child he had little schooling, on account of his defective sight. Several operations were performed on his eyes—for cataract, I think—and though he was enabled to see his way about, and to read a little, he was unable to recognise anyone across a road, and he had to use a hand magnifying glass for reading, in addition to the thick spectacles which he wore habitually. While still a child he began to see things which other people did not see, and was duly punished when he told his experiences. No doubt his parents thought it well to discourage what they took to be the exercise of

a too-exuberant imagination. Accordingly he soon learnt to keep his experiences to himself. I have heard him say that one of his grandmothers was psychic, but if his parents knew anything of the subject they must have thought that psychic power, as well as imagination, is not a thing to be cultivated. Before he was out of his teens, Wilkinson went to a Spiritualistic meeting, taken probably by someone who knew of his clairvoyant faculty. He must have shown some clairvoyance and the things seen must have been evidential, even in those early days ; for he was soon in request as speaker and clairvoyant, at Spiritualist meetings. As time went on, he became widely known, and was constantly away from home, fulfilling engagements from Paignton in Devon, to Aberdeen in the North, and from London to South Wales, where he was particularly well known. He came to see me, as I have said, when he could, in his home interludes. For a long time, and indeed to some extent all his life after I came to know him, he was insistent that his visit should not be thought of as a séance. He said that he would not give sittings in the customary way, for a fee, because he would feel upset if people paid

money and he happened to fail. He came to me in a social way, for a chat and a cup of tea, and if he got no clairvoyance I expressed no disappointment—though I felt it!—and in that event he would accept no money, not even his railway fare of a shilling or so.

I often wished that he would give up his fatiguing travels and settle down at home, giving regular sittings to me and to friends of mine. We promised him a definite income at least for a trial year, if he liked the idea. It would have been an easier life for him, and it might have led to an improvement of the evidential quality of his clairvoyance, for his mind would have been quieter than it was when he was continually travelling about, staying with all sorts of different people. But our proposal did not appeal to him. He rather liked change of company, and he had become accustomed to the travelling, though he did say sometimes that he was getting tired of it. Moreover the financial side did not interest him much. He had inherited or saved enough to bring in an income sufficient for his modest wants. He lived with sisters—he never married—in two cottages made into one, in an outlying part of Halifax, with

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an acre or two of land, which had been in the family for some time. So he went on with his public work until the end of 1929, when he began to feel unwell. He came to see me a few times, getting no clairvoyance, and obviously feeling ill. He died on March 1, 1930, aged fifty-one.

Generally, at our sittings the communications were from our own relatives or friends, and were always of evidential character. If a friend died, even at any distance, he usually turned up not long afterwards. Sometimes Wilkinson would get impressions concerning me, when he was away, and would write to me. I have already given illustrations of this.

Another interesting feature in Wilkinson's mediumship was his power of determining the length of time since the death of the person whose form he saw. He was extremely correct in this, and I think he usually got it by impression or clairsaudience. But he often said that he could make an estimate, from the appearance of the form. A recently departed person seemed solid—as solid as the sitters, he would say—while a long-dead person seemed ethereal and tenuous, difficult to see. I suppose this was

because the latter had got further away from earth conditions. Wilkinson was always right in this also. He saw and described hundreds of forms of people, during the many years that I had sittings with him, and they had died at various periods ; some only a few days before the sitting, some twenty or more years before. His estimate from appearance was always right, and when he gave the number of years, as he often did, that was never far out either—never more than a year even if the person had been dead twenty years.

And what about conditions on the other side ? I have not asked many questions about this, for my main object was to get evidence of the survival of human personality. But there was a certain amount of incidental information. It seems certain that the state following death is one of sleep or convalescence. The length of this period varies, and it is determined at least partly by the nature of the illness. After a long and exhausting illness there is a long rest ; after a sudden departure there is a speedy waking, usually after a few weeks or even days. Then, in one case known to me, the spirit was taken away, “ to scenes fair and fresh,” where he would

rest, in the company of those who had met him. It reminded me of the island-valley of Avilion, "Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow, Nor ever wind blows loudly"; where King Arthur would heal him of his grievous wound. And after convalescence on the other side, there seems to be progress in knowledge and spirituality, towards a goal unthinkably remote, as Myers said. But I heard nothing through Wilkinson of planes or physical distances. There is still some connexion with time and space, but these bonds are looser than with us. This is about as much as I have learnt, and it is enough to be going on with. We shall learn more in due time.

As to Wilkinson himself, he was one of Nature's gentlemen. Unschooled but intelligent, he had picked up much in his travels, and was always interesting in his talk. And above all he was a man of sterling honesty. Evidently he often pondered over the queer gift that he possessed, and he said to me more than once, with a half-puzzled, half-confident air: "Well, if it isn't what it purports to be, I don't know what it is." I think it was what it purported to be. To his gifts, mainly, I owe my conviction of survival, and my

gratitude to him is greater than I can express in any words.

I have said much about Wilkinson's powers, but I have not described his personal appearance. There is not much to say, except that he was clean shaven, very short in stature, rather light-haired, and of a build which inclined to portliness. He had nothing of the wild or weird about him. He had the ruddy face of a farmer, and until his last illness he seemed to have perfect health, both of body and mind. It is sometimes said that trance mediumship weakens the personality, because the will is given up to another control. Well, Wilkinson was to some extent a trance medium, but there was no doubt about the strength of his character. He knew his own mind, and could assert himself. Along with this went an exceptional scrupulousness about accepting money, and the two characteristics once made me the object of a rebuke from him. I had felt that he was not fair to himself in accepting nothing or next to nothing for his visits to me, so I sent him two pounds at Christmas. He replied that he would not return the money, since that would seem ungracious, but he desired me not to do such a thing again.

In psychical research, the term clairvoyance is used for the perception of a distant event by some means which cannot include telepathy. But it is generally used for the perception of so-called "spirit forms" by a medium who is not in trance ; it is therefore sometimes called "normal clairvoyance," and Wilkinson's mediumship was mainly of this kind. But his powers were far greater than those of any other medium I have known, for he seemed able to shut out the operation of his own mind, and all his perceptions were evidential, or very nearly all.

We do not know what this clairvoyance is, or how it works. But I think it has some connexion with what we call Imagination, and with Inspiration. Most of us, if we make our minds passive, will find ideas or images coming into our heads, as we say. They are mostly trivial recollections of something we have seen or heard or read. If I imagine myself to be a medium, and make my mind a blank as far as possible, I find myself waiting for some name or person to come into my mind, and I get, say : "Edmund." I remember an Edmund who was tall and thin, with a long moustache ; he died young, and tragically. This happens to be

fact, and I recognise it as a recollection. But, very often, names do come into our minds without apparent reason, and we think also of scenes which are new to us, so far as conscious recollection goes. People who are very good visualisers—who see things very clearly with the mind's eye—will have these experiences quite vividly ; so much so that the things seen will appear real, out there in space. I think that many supposed mediums, though quite honest, are of this class. They act as clairvoyants at meetings, or give sittings to groups of people or to single individuals, and they say what comes into their minds. If they were writers of fiction, they would be creators of characters. Charles Dickens realised his characters so vividly that he sometimes heard them speak, as with an audible voice ; he says that Sairey Gamp often spoke to him in church. Spiritualist mediums have the same kind of faculty, and sometimes the description is found to fit some person formerly known to someone present. It is then, naturally, taken as authentic. There may be some message also, which is either appropriate by chance or is the result of telepathy. I am not saying that this is the kind of thing that happens with all mediums ;

I am sure it is not. I am only saying that I suspect something of the sort to be true in the case of many quite honest people who give supposed clairvoyance. At many meetings which I have attended, the amount of success did not seem to go beyond what we might expect by chance. Moreover, the sympathetic audience is usually anxious to give the medium the benefit of the doubt, and to say "Yes," rather hesitatingly, perhaps, if asked whether a form is recognised. It may have seemed just moderately like some known deceased person. Vague descriptions can generally be fitted in, if they are of elderly people, for we have all of us had parents and grandparents, and many of us have had uncles and aunts. I believe that real other-side perception is more rare than is generally supposed.

But it exists. Wilkinson's descriptions were precise, and they were almost always backed up by names and many identifying details. Chance coincidence was out of the question. He never got a lot of names and descriptions which we could not recognise. He seemed able to shut out the operation of his own mind. If images or names did arise from his own imagination, he could suppress

them and say nothing. But it seemed more like an absolute shutting down the sluices. He never said : " I think this is from my own mind " : he either sat silent or he got something that was not within his knowledge. This made his mediumship more remarkable than any other known to me. It also made note-taking much easier, and also the estimation of the evidence. There was no need to balance hits against misses and to worry about the proportion. There were no misses. He would sit quietly for a while, then would sit forward suddenly and begin to tell what he saw ; then, after a rapid burst of speech for a few minutes, he would sit back and wait for more. He did not seem to be attending to us at all, but rather seemed to be intently listening to the other side, so to speak. He gave the impression of being keyed up and listening, not perhaps with his ears but with his whole self, for something that was outside our range of perception. Then he would either see or hear something, and would fire it off as fast as he could speak. At his best, these bursts of activity would almost run into each other, and would keep me writing hard for an hour. In more average sittings they would be separated by some minutes or even

longer. Sometimes he could get nothing at all, and after trying for a half-hour or so, would say : " I can't get anything," he did not know why, nor did we. Sometimes when the clairvoyance had seemed a little confused, he would lapse quietly into trance, and one of the controls would come, to straighten things out ; but the evidentiality of what was said was not much better—if at all—than that of the normal clairvoyance.

Sometimes, as I have indicated, people would be described and named who were not known to me but who turned out to have existed, and there was generally some reason for their coming. In a very few cases their appearance was somewhat of a puzzle, but I believe that there was a reason, if we could have fathomed it. My main point, however, is that Wilkinson's clairvoyance was of a class to itself, and did not seem to have anything to do with his imagination.

CHAPTER XVIII

CANON H. B. FREEMAN'S CONFIRM- ATORY LETTER

HITHERTO I have given evidence obtained at my own sittings. But I was able to arrange, occasionally, for friends at some distance to have sittings with Wilkinson when he happened to be in their neighbourhood. A group of people at Rock Ferry in Cheshire were specially fortunate in their sittings, and they kept me informed, but the reports were not very full. It was somewhat thus with sitters in other parts of the country. It was amply proved to me that he received information in some sort of supernormal way, when he was sitting with strangers. One rather good series of sittings was with Canon Freeman of Bristol and his family. The Canon has kindly written the following letter which he allows me to publish :

Letter from Canon H. B. Freeman, M.A.,
Senior Residentiary Canon of Bristol Cath-
edral, and formerly Vicar of Burton-on-
Trent.

“ Bentley,”

CLIFTON HILL,
BRISTOL.

1 February 1934.

MY DEAR HILL,

When my wife and I knew that you were doing a book about our gifted and sympathetic little helper Aaron Wilkinson, we thought that we should like to offer you a few memories. As to our personal impressions of him, I will quote some words which Mrs. Freeman has affixed to her notes of a sitting which he gave us on March 22, 1923, in our dining-room at the Vicarage, Burton-on-Trent, where all our talks with him took place. She wrote: “For us, Wilkinson has a particularly kindly, soothing, and beneficent presence. He gives the idea of being, in the broadest sense, a religious man.” To this I will add that he disliked giving private sittings, and that he had a holy dread of parsons, as such. You have a story in one of your books, about his once having been rebuked, if not insulted, by some clerical

bigot. He came to us, when he visited Burton for public meetings, etc., out of sheer good nature, and perhaps also from his great friendship for you. I hope that, as far as we were concerned, we managed eventually to break down something of his nervousness and reserve. To money, I always found him, as you did, quite indifferent. It was with difficulty, after a long and most fruitful sitting, I could squeeze a ten-shilling note into his hand. Anybody with a knowledge of Wilkinson's character and methods, who could assert that he obtained his astounding and recondite bits of information by secret and normal inquiries, or that he was a man greedy of gain, must be a slanderer or a fool. I think that his psychic faculties were partly hereditary ; he once told me that he had an aunt who was always "seeing dead folk." He had a lighter side to his nature ; I remember that distinguished and genial psychometrist, Mr. Vout Peters, telling me, many years ago, that at a sportive party, they dressed Wilkinson up as a bride ; in which incarnation he must have made a ravishing spectacle. With no small experience of modern mediums, I consider that the hero of your book was, in some ways, the greatest ; and he gave one

the impression of his genius existing as something outside himself.

1. I shall use no pseudonyms ; though often unavoidable, they are a great bane of reports. Our first short section shall deal with his power of "*sensing*."

I may here remark that Wilkinson's capacity for getting names quickly and accurately, I have never known equalled. This is illustrated in the present phase which I present of his psychic activities. Coming into our dining-room one day, he asked incidentally after my wife's toothache, of which he had normally known nothing ; he then said that he felt the presence of an elderly lady whose fragile and delicate appearance he minutely described. "Her name was Lowe, I feel that her husband was a doctor, and that his Christian name was George," etc. This Mrs. Lowe, whom we had known only slightly, and who had been dead for a few years, can only have been connected with our house, by having probably visited a former owner, thirty years before. When we had sat down to lunch, on this bitterly cold morning, Wilkinson said, with his mouth full of roast shoulder of mutton and onion sauce : "The Christian

name of that lady has just come to me ; it is the same as your daughter's." This was correct, though he did not actually repeat the name, which was Cecilia.

2. *Physical Mediumship* was indicated by him for us, on one of the rare occasions, when he passed into trance. He had glided into his usual impersonation of the Scotswoman ; he evidently felt the trance coming on, and, with his usual tact and thoughtfulness, he asked us whether we had ever seen anyone in trance, fearing, no doubt, that we might be discomposed. Almost immediately, a heavy picture on the wall, which had been firm enough for twenty years, came crashing down ; but the glass was not broken. Soon afterwards, a sharp tapping, as though with a pencil, was heard on the glass of a photograph of my dead son, John Bentley—of whom more in the next section—on the other side of the room.

3. Not infrequently, this man certainly seemed to be in some way in touch with those *Discarnate*. He mentioned a Woodward, whose name meant nothing to us at the time, but whom we afterwards discovered to be one of my ancestors, and that we possess a picture of my great-great-grandmother,

Mary Woodward. With a cold and realistic shudder—which my wife says she will always remember—he told her of the drowning of a great-uncle, while skating, about the year 1840. He spoke of this episode with a sort of glacial horror ; I should in fairness add that, though the drowning was said to be accidental, I am not sure whether skating was alluded to, and I know that the name Thomas was specified instead of James. My wife had heard the story of the death of this youth of nineteen, from her mother ; but it was only a vague and misty memory until Wilkinson revived it.

At one of our sittings he got the word “Port,” which he, not unnaturally, at first supposed to be something to drink. He then discovered it to be the surname of a man ; and said that the Christian name was Howard. This individual was Henry Howard Port, a Churchwarden of mine who had recently passed over. Curiously enough, the first more ordinary name Henry, by which Port was usually known, could not be recovered by the medium. I suppose that I must have heard the second name Howard ; but I had no conscious recollection of it.

Wilkinson’s association with our only son,

who was killed on September 20, 1917, at the battle of Menin Road, aged twenty years and six months, was frequent in our sittings, and was always marked by a singular buoyancy, lightness and happiness, a faithful reflection of the lad's temperament. I will quote verbatim scattered expressions, from his mother's contemporaneous notes. "I want to go jumping about ; such a feeling of buoyancy ; he has such a happy manner ; you won't mind if I jump about, will you ? " (Does so.) " Somebody wants to get near you : he has a teasing touch ; I must touch you both, you don't mind ? It is a discarnate feeling that I get with him, he has gone over. I feel so elastic, I cannot keep still." (Jumps about again.) " A happy, buoyant, laddish feeling. It is like a glad morning." Then, at a sitting seven months later, when my daughter was away : " I can see your son. His face is lit up with a smile, face radiant, he has a little cane in his hand, and is waving it. He wants us to know that he is conscious of his sister's absence. He is so quick and so intense, that it is difficult to get things from him. He is full of tease ; his face is quite illumined, brimful of buoyancy, youth and vigour." This bright picture, which Wilkin-

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son drew from year to year of our son, is at least unvarying and consistent ; and is much like what he was in his short life.

I do not know whether, my dear Hill, you remember sending me the very curious cross-correspondence, which occurred in your northern home on March 30, 1923, a week after our Wilkinsonian sitting at Burton? The Scotswoman then said, to your sister and to yourself, " A young man touches me ; John Bentley Freeman " (the first name never came through with us) " says he is as free as air ; jumps about like quicksilver. They don't call him Free-man for nothing, or inaccurately. I have seen him before, but I don't know where. This young man is looking all round ; first time he has been here." (So the buoyant picture is still consistent amid alien surroundings, and one hundred and fifty miles away.) " He minds " (Scots for " remembers ") " old Port. Not place, and not something to drink. This old Port is a friend of the man who preaches at the Kirk." (Myself, H. B. F.) " Port is a man that the young man seems to have met since he passed over."

The next incident which I have to record in this long " Discarnate " section, is in line

with the consistent buoyant picture drawn in Burton and Bradford, and has impressed me more, personally, perhaps, than any other psychic experience of my life. I do not know whether it would appear of value to others who are strangers. In one of these exalted moments, Wilkinson—a shy little bachelor—exclaimed to my daughter, then a girl of about twenty, with an amusing diffidence: “Do you know, I feel as if I wanted to whip you—as if I wanted to whip your legs!” When I asked Cecilia afterwards, what this extraordinary punitive aspiration could portend, she replied: “Ah, how often, when we were children, and were walking up New Street”—leading from the Vicarage—“Goggie would get behind me, and keep beating my legs with his stick!” (“Goggie” was her pet name for her brother, and he seemed to try to give it to you at Bradford.)

4. My fourth and last specimen of Wilkinson’s varied psychic powers, is a *prophecy*, (at the final sitting that we ever had with him) which impressed my wife as much as the “legs” episode, narrated above, had impressed me. I transcribe her careful notes. “I can see your son again. He has brought

some beautiful flowers with him, a mixture of red and pink ; they are pretty. These flowers indicate something. There are three tiers of them, like a wedding cake ; a tier for each of somebody. It means a message with the number 3. He is very interested, and full of anticipation about something that will happen. Mrs. Freeman,"—addressing my wife directly and speaking very impressively—"you take notice of a 3 ; perhaps it might be the third day of the month, or the thirteenth, or anything in which the number three might come in, perhaps the third month ; I can't tell you exactly ; and it also concerns three people. Something that will give great pleasure. It is an omen that indicates real pleasure, someone's uprising, something good for them."

Our suggested solution of this detailed and very emphatic triple prediction is as follows :

In almost exactly three months after this ultimate sitting, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Cave, most unexpectedly offered me, on the twenty-third day of the month, a Bristol Residentiary Canonry. This was certainly "someone's uprising" ; or rather, an "uprising" for three of us, the remnant of our war-depleted family. It is interesting also

to notice that the ancient arms of Bristol Cathedral (dedicated to The Trinity) are three crowns, "three tiers of them" one above the other.

I only wish that these admiring and grateful family memories might add a humble brick to the literary and scientific fabric which you are lovingly raising to the great seer and clairvoyant, whom psychical research has prematurely lost. If I cannot, with the Psalmist, call our little friend Aaron a "saint of the Lord," he was at least a kind and good man who held his marvellous—and alas! how rare—gifts, in unselfish trust for bereaved Humanity.

Wishing your memorial volume every success,

Believe me, my dear Hill,

Yours always very sincerely,

H. B. FREEMAN.

CHAPTER XIX

THEORY OF SURVIVAL

ACCCEPTANCE of new facts or new theories is not altogether a question of evidence. It depends to a great extent on their harmony or disharmony with our existing beliefs ; on whether they fit in, or do not fit in, with our general knowledge. Psychical phenomena seem out of relation with the organised body of knowledge which we call science. They seem so ; but if they really do happen, they must fit in with other facts, if this is a universe of harmonious and inter-related things. The fault is in us, that we fail to see the connexion. What is required is some all-embracing theory which shall find a place for psychical phenomena in the frame of science.

There is not yet anything that can be called a scientific theory ; there is nothing more than hypothesis, but in the opinion of life-long students such as Sir Oliver Lodge

there is good hope that the speculations to which the facts point may develop into something that may be called a theory—a really scientific explanation.

It seems probable that along with our physical body we have another body, of similar shape and size, made of something else. It does not much matter what we call it—ether, or X, or a spiritual body, or what. It interpenetrates the physical body, and is in close connexion with it, but it is separable from it, and goes on existing when the body dies. Its substance does not decay or suffer from any disability. Like the Ether of Space, of which indeed it is perhaps made, it does not get tired. Its properties are perfect. This body is not the spirit but is the body of the spirit in that next stage of existence. And its environment is made of the same stuff. There is an etherial counterpart, not only of the body but also of the physical universe. The sense-organs of the etherial body respond to the etherial environment as our material sense-organs respond to the material environment, and consequently the etherial world seems as real as the material world seems to us. This would account for the statement, which is often made, that deceased people do not always

realise that they are dead. Things seem real to them ; they still have a body, and they still perceive an external world. It is a world of greater beauty, and is indeed a perfect world, in the physical sense ; there is no disease or fatigue, and sense-perception seems to be perfect. There is still moral and spiritual immaturity, but on the physical side there is perfection. We hear of flowers and music and teachers of all sorts of knowledge ; we even hear of houses. No doubt the language is often to be taken as symbolical. When we talk of houses we mean structures made of matter ; when a communicating spirit speaks of houses he cannot mean that ; he means structures made out of the substance which makes up the world in which he finds himself. But it is quite possibly the best he can do, to make us understand him. If a bird tried to tell a fish about the sort of life he lives in the air, he would have to use language that the fish could understand. He would say that aerial life is rather like aquatic life but that movement is freer, the senses reach farther, and there is more light and beauty. If the bird is a sea-bird and has a nest in some cliff, he will not be able to describe it very well ; he will have to take the nearest things in the

life-experience of the fish, and say it is like that to some extent. Accordingly we need not be very supercilious about the statements concerning houses and the like. They may sound rather absurd, but they may be as near the truth as the reporter can get, in consequence of our limited knowledge. But the main point is that if there is an etherial counterpart of everything, the world there, being all of a piece with the new sense-organs, will seem as real as the world here.

The term "spirit forms" is commonly used, but is not exact. The forms seen by clairvoyants are not spirits; they are the etheric bodies of spirits. Spirit is formless, or, in other words, outside space and time. While encased in the etheric body, spirits still have some spatial and temporal relations, though these are less restrictive than with us. They do not seem able to be in two places at once, for in one of Sir Oliver Lodge's experiments a communicator said he was doing something else at a distance, and evidently went away. But distance means less to them than to us. And so with time. They can sometimes give us warning of coming events, but are uncertain about the period that is to elapse before the thing happens.

The etheric senses are for the most part inoperative or asleep until we slough off the material vesture. But in clairvoyance there is a momentary opening of the etheric sight, and the clairvoyant sees into the etheric world. How it happens that he can so often see one's relatives or friends is a puzzle. They will no doubt have their occupations, and one could hardly expect them to be available at sittings. Indeed they are not always available, for it has sometimes happened that Wilkinson would say : " There is no one here to-night," and would get no clairvoyance. But he generally got something. Sometimes the forms seen, and names given, would be those of people only slightly known to me, and the process seemed more like the opening of his etheric eyes on a part of the etheric world which did not very much concern me. Usually the forms seen would be my own people, and they seemed to have " come," so to speak, but occasionally I could see little or no reason for the person described to have favoured me with a visit. When I look out of my window I see people passing ; mostly people only slightly known to me. So with clairvoyance on some occasions. The medium has opened his psychic window, and sees

anyone who happens to be passing ; unless indeed some friend or friends have come specially.

All this is, of course, speculation. It is the kind of guess to which the phenomena lead me, but I claim no exactness for it.

My own feeling, for what it is worth, is against much speculation in these matters. I think that when we know more physics, about the nature of the Ether of Space, or whatever future physicists will call it, we may be better able to theorise about the connexion of mind and matter, which is at the root of the problem. If we knew more about that, we should know more about the habitat of the mind when it has left the body ; at least it seems to me probable that we should. And it is dangerous to speculate much, lest we distract attention from the avenue which shall lead to real progress of knowledge. That is the danger of all premature theorising. It is well to keep ourselves aloof and afloat, ready to seize on any indications of the truth. In particular it is well to distrust much of that materialistic or pseudo-materialistic sort of thing which has purported to come from the other side, about planes and physical distances and the like.

Some writers have told us how many miles it is from the earth to the Summerland or abode of averagely good spirits ; and to other parts of the celestial and infernal regions. When reading such books, the best religion is agnosticism. We do not really know. Indeed, no one knows. Let us then be honest, and say so, awaiting further light.

Spiritualism and psychical research are comparatively new, for Spiritualism may be said to date from 1848 and psychical research from 1882. Of course this kind of phenomenon has happened all along the ages, and there are good accounts of spiritualistic phenomena in the writings of the Neo-Platonists of a century or two after the birth of Christ. But the serious and scientific study of the phenomena is new. Consequently it is too soon to indulge to any great extent in speculations or in general philosophic schemes. Still, we cannot help speculating a little, and our individual speculations are at least our own, and may have some intuitive truth in them. Here, then, are one or two of my general ideas, to which I attach no scientific value but which seem to me indicated by the facts, though not proved by them.

How is it, we ask ourselves, that the

amount of mediumship seems to ebb and flow? In one generation there will be remarkable mediums such as D. D. Home, and then perhaps in the next generation there will be no outstanding medium. For many years there was no one of much consequence except Mrs. Piper, and she was in America. In later times we have had Aaron Wilkinson, the most remarkable medium I have known, Mrs. Osborne Leonard, and a few others of less power. But on the whole mediumship seems latterly to have declined. There seem to be no young mediums arising to take the place of the older ones. What is the reason? There is certainly a wider interest in these things than ever before, and we might expect a growing body of mediums.

Well, I think there may be as large an amount of mediumship as ever—even perhaps a larger amount—but that it is running in private channels. If an ordinary citizen finds that he has mediumistic powers, he is under no compulsion to inform the public about it, and he probably keeps it to himself (or herself), unless he feels the call to place his gift to some extent at the service of others. It is usually understood that we know about all the mediums there are; but it is believed

by many that psychical power is almost universal, in varying degree ; and now there is certainly more development than ever before. I say, then, that there may be as much mediumship as ever but that it may be exercised in private or not at all. There is therefore perhaps no use for the hypothesis which sometimes strikes me as probable.

This hypothesis is that the whole thing is under the control of higher Powers. These superintending minds, these ministers of God—or we can say God Himself if we prefer it—see that evolution is better than catastrophic advance. Man has to learn his way about in the universe, and it is best for him to learn gradually. He was allowed three hundred years to get well grounded in the elements of science, say from Kepler to the present day. It needed three centuries for man to assure himself that there was nothing capricious in the phenomena of nature, that law is everywhere, and that the law is comprehensible, indicating that the Lawgiver has a mind of the same kind as our own. Having got mankind well grounded in this fundamental belief in the orderliness of physical Nature, we were allowed to have a glimpse of something beyond, namely, the psychical

world. Mediums were raised up, and the result was Spiritualism with its daughter Psychical Research—a modern miss, sceptical and rather superior, but desperately honest and anxious to get at the truth. Then the amount of mediumship ebbed and flowed as the Higher Powers thought fit. We seem to be at an ebb period at the moment. Perhaps the Powers think we have got far enough for the present and that we had better digest what we have got, before being allowed to proceed further. Perhaps, however, all this is fanciful. I advance it as a suggestion only, not as a scientific theory.

There is one difficulty which perhaps ought to be mentioned here. It is felt mainly by biologists, whose training has accustomed them to regard as real only such things as can be seen in a test-tube or under a microscope. They say that it is unscientific to reason from physical events to metaphysical causes. All that a medium says is physical ; he communicates his impressions to us, by speech or writing, which we interpret with the help of air-pulses or ether-pulses. The whole business is in the physical world. If we argue from the data that discarnate minds are causing the phenomena, we are going out

of the physical world into the realm of metaphysics. One can understand the difficulty, and no doubt we have all felt it, more or less. And yet, is it a real difficulty ?

Consider what happens when someone speaks to us. He sets the air in motion, and communicates ideas to us. I infer from this experience that his mind has sent the communication ; I infer the existence and activity of a mind somewhat like mine, associated with the lump of matter which I call his body. This can hardly be called unscientific. If you dislike the word " mind," you can call it something else ; the word does not matter. It can be called a stream of consciousness, or an awareness, or X. So long as it is admitted that I am justified in inferring that there is something there, of the same nature as the thing I call my mind, I am satisfied. Now, the evidence for the existence of discarnate minds is of the same kind. It is smaller in quantity, but it is of the same order. If it is scientific to agree that the evidence of ordinary life is sufficient to justify belief in incarnate minds, it is scientific to admit that the evidence may justify belief in discarnate minds, if it becomes sufficiently extensive. The method of reasoning is the

same, and there is no logical difficulty. It is, of course, open to anyone to say that the evidence does not convince him, though this may be because he is acquainted with a smaller amount of evidence than the believers.

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CHAPTER XX

CONTROLS

THE question of controls, as apart from communicators, is a difficult one. All trance mediums seem to have one control, such as Mrs. Leonard's Feda, or several controls as in the Piper case, who take charge of the medium and act as intermediaries for the communicators. The theory is that these controls are familiar with the medium's bodily apparatus and can manage it better than a stranger could. This is reasonable enough. On the other hand, Mrs. Piper's Dr. Phinuit, who was the regular control in her early days, was unable to establish his identity. He was supposed to be a doctor who had lived in Alsace-Lorraine, but the S.P.R. could not trace him. And the later Emperor group were not very convincing to most of us. Mrs. Sidgwick made a careful study of these controls, and inclined to the opinion that they were secondary personalities, while the communicators of the

“G.P.” kind were what they claimed to be. Nothing can yet be said to be satisfactorily proved. The Indian chiefs, and little negro girls, and so forth, in the case of other mediums, are similarly rather puzzling. It is perhaps best to leave the question open.

It was as a normal clairvoyant that Wilkin-son was at his best. When conditions were good, he would sometimes talk almost continuously for an hour or more, describing the forms he saw, and repeating what he heard with his inner hearing or whatever we like to call it. And it was evidential all of it ; there was no padding. Moreover there were short pauses which gave me time to catch up if I got a few words behind in my shorthand notes. I have said that he sometimes talked almost continuously, but I mean that there were no interludes of ordinary conversation, when he was at his best. He would talk rapidly for a few minutes, and would then stop for a few minutes, seeming to be listening, with an abstracted sort of look, but with no loss of consciousness. This kind of medium-ship is admirable from the note-taker's point of view. But he occasionally went into trance, and indeed in his later days this became more frequent. Perhaps this was because he felt more

at home with us than in earlier times. He said that he would not go into trance with inexperienced sitters ; I suppose he thought that they might get alarmed if anything unusual happened, and he might suffer in consequence. Occasionally, in trance mediumship, there is apparently a struggle between two spirits for control of the medium, and this might be disturbing to sitters who had not seen anything of the kind before. I do not know whether there is a real struggle, but it looks like something of the kind. It happened only once or twice in my experience with Wilkinson. I once took him to the house of some friends who had lost their father. When the trance came on, he got up and began to walk about, yawning and making arm movements as if pushing something away. He went to the piano and beckoned one of the deceased man's daughters to come to the music stool as if he wanted an accompanist while he sang. (Wilkinson himself was no singer.) After a few minutes the usual control came through, and described the man who had been trying to speak direct. He had been very musical, and a good singer. The solo " Comfort Ye ! " was mentioned as one that he used to sing. This was correct.

He was a man of strong individuality, and it was in keeping with his character that he should try to speak to his widow and daughters if he saw an opportunity.

Wilkinson's usual control, who came through if there had been any confusion in the normal clairvoyance, which required straightening out, was a Scotswoman whose name was said to be Mary Fraser. I never sought for evidence of identity, for obviously it was hardly possible to get anything convincing. Even if she had given details about her life which were correct, it would be possible to assume that the medium had heard all these things, and that his subliminal had stored them up and used them in a personation. But I did think that the Scottish accent was better than Wilkinson in his normal state could have produced, and I once invited a friend who had lived in Scotland for some years, to come to a sitting and give his opinion. He was not a Spiritualist or keenly interested, but was open-minded. He told me afterwards that every little inflection was true to nature, and that he felt he was listening to a Scotswoman. I remember she said when going: "lang may your lum reek"—which I did not

understand. My friend said it was a common Scottish remark, and meant "Long may your chimney smoke!" However, the medium might know the phrase; I do not quote it as serious evidence. But the speech of this control was certainly impressive. Another control who sometimes appeared was one John Brotherton, a genial Yorkshireman, who spoke the dialect. This I could criticise, for it is familiar to me, and it was very good; but Wilkinson was a Yorkshireman, so this proved nothing. These controls saw spirits about, as Mrs. Leonard's Feda does, and gave descriptions and messages; but I do not think that the evidence was any better than in the normal clairvoyance. And it was more difficult to report, for there was a good deal of non-evidential control-talk.

Whoever or whatever the control was in Wilkinson's case, its dominance was very complete. Most mediums sit still when the control is in possession, sometimes with eyes shut, as in the case of Mrs. Leonard; but Wilkinson often got up and walked about the room. Particularly when the Scotswoman was in command, he—or she—would take an interest in a table-cloth or a curtain or in the dress of any lady present, or in my book-

cases—though the interest in this direction seemed less keen ! A curious and amusing feature was a gesture which at first I did not understand. This was a movement of one hand, from behind to the front, which was often repeated if the medium walked about. Later, it dawned on me that it was the movement of a lady holding up a longish dress. I do not give this as evidential, but it certainly was in keeping ; the Mary Fraser control was supposed to have died many years before I made Wilkinson's acquaintance, and no doubt dresses were then long. But this is a matter that is out of my range, so I hasten to get back to things which I better understand. John Brotherton was supposed to have been a Halifax man, or to have lived near Halifax. I have ascertained that there were Brothertons at a place near Halifax, a place which the control mentioned as having been his home. But that proves nothing.

Some mediums say that they occasionally have clairvoyant visions of their controls, but I do not remember that Wilkinson ever said anything about seeing Mary Fraser, or John Brotherton. Indeed he seemed to have very few experiences on his own account. I once

asked him whether he ever saw his own deceased relatives, and he said that he sometimes saw his mother. On one occasion he saw her with another woman, who looked poor and shabby, and he saw them so distinctly that he forgot for the moment that his mother was dead. He exclaimed : " Why, mother, whoever have you got with you ? " and she replied quite clearly : " Oh, it's somebody I am just looking after."

I did not ask Wilkinson's controls for evidence of identity, because it would not have proved anything ; I could not have proved that the medium did not know any facts that might have been given. Nor did I ask them much about their condition over there. I could not have verified it, whatever they might have said. I did ask the control what she thought of cremation, and she replied strongly in its favour. So long as it was made quite sure that life had departed, cremation was the best thing. My reason for asking was the opinion held by some, that cremation might cause pain to the spirit, if the latter had not got quite away ; and it has been thought by some people that the spirit does not get clear away for some days. But she did not seem to agree with this ; it

was right to cremate as soon as physical death had taken place.

As to conditions on the other side, nothing much was given in detail. Life was said to be happier, there is no physical pain or illness or disability—no faulty vision, I was once assured—and that our sufferings here are all part of the scheme, and have their uses. But Wilkinson's controls and communicators seemed to feel that their experience could not be adequately described in language which has been evolved for the description of earth-experience, and accordingly they did not care to try. On the religious side they were never theological, but at the same time they were never scornful or hostile towards theological systems. They seemed to think of the kindly human virtues first, and indeed their teaching, so far as they did any teaching, was Christian in the sense of being one with the teaching of Christ. But my main object was to get real evidence of survival, so I did not spend much time in encouraging communications which could not be tested.

CHAPTER XXI

PROS AND CONS

IN all debatable matters, it is desirable to look at all sides, to consider the pros and cons, as nearly as possible without bias. In what has been said, I have been presenting facts which seem to me to justify the belief in human survival and occasional communication. It must not be thought, however, that my conclusions are based on those facts alone, or on any number of other facts of the same kind. There are many other facts which point in the same direction. I have alluded to some of them, in fragmentary fashion, when quoting cases of visions experienced by dying people. But there are many instances of sound and healthy people who have had similar experiences. I will give one example from the writings of John Wesley, who would have made an admirable investigator.

A young lady woke up and saw by her bedside an apparition of the young man to

whom she was engaged. The left side of his head was battered in, with the brain protruding. She woke her sister, and told her what she had seen. A few days later news came that the young man had been killed. He was standing in the belfry of a church, and was struck on the left side of the head by a descending bell, the wounds inflicted being as seen by the young lady. This occurred at a distance of many miles from where she lived. The case is remote, and unfortunately the record is not contemporary, but Wesley's informant knew the girl who had had the experience, and vouched for her truthfulness.¹

Wesley saw plainly that if the existence of the soul could be proved or rendered probable by physical facts such as these, religion would receive a strong support. He collected many such cases, and took great pains to obtain corroborative testimony. In more recent times the Society for Psychical Research has collected an enormous amount of similar material. A selection from this material can be studied in the book called *Phantasms of the Living*, edited by Mrs.

¹ John Wesley's *Journal* (Edition of 1856), Vol. II, pp. 350-1. Letter of June 3, 1756.

Henry Sidgwick in an abbreviated form. My conclusions, then, are not based entirely on mediumistic experiences, but are to some extent based on, or supported by, other forms of psychical experience. The sceptic must read such books as F. W. H. Myers's *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, and must deal with many kinds of phenomena and the arguments based on them, as well as the phenomena known as mediumistic.

But enough about the pros. What about the cons? I have dealt more or less with possible fraud, with telepathy from the sitter, and with telepathy from distant people, but what are the more general objections?

I do not see that there are any serious scientific objections. Science agrees that all phenomena are legitimate objects for investigation. Any objection remaining must be from some angle other than that of the reason. One of them is this :

Spiritualists and psychical researchers are apt to be too much occupied with phenomena. They are studying phenomena ; they may even be said to seek these phenomena because they are novel, exciting, weird, attractive to abnormal minds. But in any case they are occupied with phenomena

of the material world, even if those phenomena lead to inferences concerning another. And this will lead them to neglect other sides of their nature. They will neglect the spiritual side, which should be cultivated along with the rational. It has also been said as a corollary to this, that in ages when psychical things received much attention, real religion was at a low ebb. This was the line taken by the Bishops of Winchester and Oxford (Drs. Talbot and Gore), in a friendly quadrilateral controversy carried on by Sir Oliver Lodge and myself some years ago, each of us seeing the letters of the others.

The answer seems to me to be, first, that all science is occupied with phenomena, and that the objection on this score is equally applicable to any other kind of research. It is undeniable that we have other aptitudes which require to be cultivated, as well as the rational ; and all scientists must try not to be too much immersed in their speciality. But that is no argument against their research being made. As to the other point, it is difficult to prove, and the two eminent Bishops did not seem to me to make out their case. But I agree that it is a point to be kept in mind.

Of course, even if it could be proved that interest in psychical things coincided with a low degree of religious feeling, it would not be proved that the one was the cause of the other. And if it is admitted that Wesley was right in regarding psychical science as an aid to religion, because it proves a spiritual world and breaks the bonds of materialism, this must be counted in favour of interest in psychical phenomena. Indeed it renders rather improbable the assumption that psychical interest can be really harmful to religion, though it may be harmful to ecclesiasticism.

Another *contra* argument appeals strongly to some minds, though it can hardly be called scientific. It is the argument that the question of a future life is best left unproved, even if there is such a continuation. Professor Henry Sidgwick was inclined to think that hope and faith were better for us than knowledge, though he was open-minded enough to be one of the founders of the S.P.R. Browning expresses much the same opinion in his poem "La Saisiaz." But this view is, I think, unusual. If we reach a spiritistic conclusion—if we believe in survival and that our condition will depend on the way in

which we have used our opportunities here, this should result in a betterment of human character. The objector will say that the improvement in human actions would be only enlightened self-interest, and would not indicate an improvement in character. Well, this argument can hardly be advanced by orthodox Christians, for their religion has always put reward and punishment in a prominent place in its theology. And it is not very likely to be advanced by the materialist, who is out mainly for an improvement in our present condition ; for the belief in survival will certainly tend to make people act in a way that will lead to improvement in the physical conditions of others. It would seem that the argument can be advanced logically only by those who are not fundamentally scientific in their thinking. They do not desire knowledge overmuch ; they desire a "boundless contiguity of shade," as Tyndall once said, in which there will be room for their imaginations to work. Of course those who already have definite opinions on the nature of the after-life will discourage investigation, lest it should prove that their beliefs are wrong. That is human nature. But it is not a valid argument

against the investigation. The “cons,” then, it seems to me, are few and rather weak. But some of them are temperamental, and will continue to be held.

CHAPTER XXII

AM I A SPIRITUALIST ?

IN my book, *Letters from Sir Oliver Lodge*, I quote a remark of Sir Oliver's to the effect that he would be interested to learn why I did not consider myself a Spiritualist. He himself did not feel that he could repudiate the label ; and, knowing my opinions pretty thoroughly, he was rather surprised that I disclaimed it. I thought at the time that my reply was adequate ; I do not attend any Spiritualist meetings, and am not a member of any Spiritualist society except the London Spiritualist Alliance ; and membership of this body does not imply any creed. But I am not so sure that I was right in my disclaimer. Let me think it out ; as Oliver Wendell Holmes used to say, there's nothing like talking or writing for finding out what you think about this question or that.

The dictionary definitions of the word

"spiritualism" and its derivatives are not very helpful, for they give all the meanings which the words have been used to convey, and leave us to select the one we like best. But I suppose there are two principal meanings. Spiritualism is (1) Belief in human survival and the possibility of communication with the departed in one or other of the ways studied by psychical students. (2) Membership of a society or body which functions as a religious group. I am a Spiritualist in the first sense, but not in the second, though I am not hostile. I am bound to admit that I have not been much edified by the meetings I have attended when opportunity offered. The inspirational addresses and the like are often rather tedious, and the clairvoyance is usually vague, descriptions being such that someone in the audience is pretty sure to claim the spirit as a relative or friend. I agree that there are exceptions, but I have never yet had anything evidential at any of these public meetings. Still, the existence of these meetings and these bodies is proof that they satisfy or have satisfied some need on the part of their founders or present supporters; and therefore I should be the last to deny their usefulness. I merely say

that they have not helped me personally ; I am glad that they help other people.

In the other sense I am a Spiritualist whole-heartedly. I have been convinced of survival and communication by years of careful investigation. I am as sure of it as I am of most things. Nothing worthy proving can be proven, said Tennyson, and we must admit that it is not possible to prove even the existence of the external world ; it may be a gigantic hallucination. But we assume its reality, and the assumption works, so we are justified in accepting it. I cannot prove the existence of atoms or electrons ; I have never seen them, nor has anyone else, so their reality is a step further removed from perception than is the grass and the flowers. But we infer their existence from the behaviour of matter, and the inference works. So with the minds of departed people. I infer their existence, from phenomena that I have observed, and I am as sure of their reality as I am of the reality of electrons. The evidence is sufficient for me, though I do not expect other people to believe because I do. They have not had my experience. Well, I believe in survival and communication, and that is the basis of the Spiritualist's system of

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philosophy. There seems also to be good reason to believe that the next stage is one of progress. We are at present in one of the lower classes of the universal school, and we shall learn more about its seemingly harsh discipline when we get into one of the upper classes. Further, it seems absurd to suppose that human intelligence is the highest that exists. We find orderliness and comprehensibility out there in nature, and it is reasonable to infer that a great Mind—something like our own but greater—is behind the veil of phenomena. There may be many intermediate grades, and accordingly a belief in angels is not at all absurd. This, however, is perhaps going a little beyond the evidence, though it is a reasonable belief.

There are of course many difficulties. There are difficulties in all systems of belief. For example, I am rather bothered about the number of souls that the universe must contain, if all human beings have survived. There are nearly two thousand millions of people alive on the earth to-day, and in half a century or so they will all have departed ; and this has been going on for no one knows how long, say two million years, if that is the

period in which human beings can be said to have existed, though of course the numbers were formerly smaller than is the case now. It would seem that the celestial regions must be getting rather crowded. Still, Space probably does not mean the same thing to discarnate beings, and perhaps there can be no such thing as crowding. Or it may be that the cave-men have been melted down, so to speak, and new souls forged out of the stuff that they were made of. That would keep the numbers reasonably manageable. Well, these are difficulties, but they need not worry us. Survival, individual continuation, is the main thing, and this is reasonably proved by the evidence. Further knowledge will come in due time.

On the moral and spiritual side, I turn back to the simple and direct teaching of the Christian Gospels. I confess that, when I read them, I am continually astonished that these Gospels should have led to the Christianity of our own day. There seems little relation between the noble simplicity and goodness of Jesus, and the complicated ceremonial and the magical practices of the Roman Church, or even of the ecclesiasticism of orthodox Protestantism. I think that

Christ would not recognise Christianity as being the religion which looks to him as its founder ; unless indeed he found it in the Society of Friends. Not only the ritual, but also the outworn creeds, of the churches, are foreign to his spirit. When we read the Gospels we feel a friendliness, a kinship, with the central figure, and we agree to all that he says, or practically all ; he was the product of his time, and would naturally reflect its opinions in some matters. We reverence his character to the uttermost, and wish we could have known him personally, far below him though we may feel ourselves to be. His teaching, carried into practice, would save the world, and in this sense he would be a saviour if we would let him. But theology has made his salvation a very different thing from that. The set creeds may have had their uses, but they are worse than useless now. They prevent the intelligent and honest young person from joining the church. He says that he would have to do so much mental reservation that it would seem to him duplicity. He would have to say that he believes in the resurrection of the body, which no one now believes. In order not to be lying, he has to say to himself that

he means the spiritual body, or something like that. Similarly with other items of the creeds. In all this we feel in a different atmosphere from that in which Christ lived and worked. He was all for conduct, for character, for realisation of the Fatherhood of God ; for kindliness and sympathy and peace. He was against the set forms of the prevailing religion, and he was murdered by the priests because of his heterodoxy. If he were here now he would be among the Spiritualists or some of the other simple and despised sects, rather than among the ecclesiastical great ones, and I fear he would be outlawed again, if not executed. But he commands the reverence of all honest souls. And indeed we must not be too hard on organised religion. Institutions are necessary forms ; they furnish a permanent framework, as the generations change and pass. It is inevitable that they should to some extent fossilise. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man, says Emerson, as Methodism of Wesley, and Quakerism of George Fox. The institution keeps the spirit alive as long as it can, but the form becomes a fossil in the end, unless another great spirit arises to keep it alive.

It is a remarkable testimony to the greatness of Jesus of Nazareth that so much of his spirit remains in the churches, in spite of the ritual and creed with which they are overlaid and encumbered. He is still the central figure of Western moral and spiritual thought. Perhaps the churches will gradually divest themselves of their theological trappings, and will turn to Christ and be saved.

I have said nothing about the mystical side of religion, for I have no first-hand experience of the kind. But I have read with interest the experiences of many who have been thus favoured, and it is obvious that in any complete philosophy of religion these experiences must be considered, as William James considered a selection of them in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. I even agree with him that Truth probably lies in the mystical direction. But these experiences are usually described in the terms of the prevailing theological system, and perhaps ought not to be taken altogether on trust. The experiences were real, but is their interpretation necessarily true in any ultimate sense? We must subject these accounts to our rational and intuitive criticism. My own desire is

for a rational religion which all normal people can share. That is my tendency ; but I do not deny the vision of those who see what I do not. I merely say that I must formulate my own faith, such as it is.

This book is a record of facts, with the inferences which seem to me required in explanation of those facts, in so far as such explanations are possible. In any case, they are provisional. But there is undoubtedly a connexion between these facts and inferences and religion. They suggest the existence of a spiritual world, in which, indeed, we already live, and in which we shall continue to exist, as individuals, after the shedding of the material bodies which we now inhabit. Regarding ourselves as spirits, there is no reason to believe that we are the only spirits there are in this universe. There may be innumerable different kinds, as there are innumerable grades of existence in the material world. Our mundane science suggests this as probable. At the top of the scale there may well be a Mind which we call God, who ordereth all things. Thus the philosophy to which psychical research points is confirmatory of religion. It supports a religious view of the universe. But it is

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scientific or philosophical. It is an affair of the reason rather than of the character or soul. And many good people feel that it is therefore not a particularly good thing. Emerson says, in his essay called "The Over-Soul," that Truth, Justice, Love, are not concerned with duration, and that when we dwell in these we are on a higher level than when we ask questions about the immortality of the soul, and so forth. This is no doubt true. It will seem particularly true to good souls who can habitually live on the heights, or who have had what is called religious experience or mystical insight. I should be the last to urge such people to concern themselves with psychical research. But I think it will be important and useful to those who have had no such experience. It shows the way to a rational religion. And perhaps the number of such people is increasing. Science has made such strides in the last three centuries, and its methods have so greatly entered into the daily thinking and practice of all, that the religion of the future, if it is to be general, must be rational. It must be supportable by facts and arguments which all can understand. So, while agreeing that psychical ideas are not of the highest

religious quality on the moral and spiritual side, they have their place, and an important place, in the foundations of rational religion.

We may agree with Emerson that the psychical is not the spiritual—as Sir William Barrett also used to say—and that it is better to aspire to Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, than to acquire knowledge concerning individual survival of death. But the one does not exclude the other. Both are good.

Some thinkers have inclined to the belief that it is better not to seek such knowledge. But this is a scientific and progressive age, and most minds feel that it is right to learn all we can. There is not much danger that we shall learn too much. In this boundless universe, there will always be a boundless extent of the unknown, into which we can project our faith and our imagination. And indeed there seems to be an over-ruling Providence in this matter of our acquisition of knowledge. In some periods there has been an outburst of psychical power, and then a withdrawal. At present we are suffering from a withdrawal. The sluices have been closed, or almost closed. The Higher Powers perhaps see that we have learned

enough for the present, and that it is time to wait and to digest what we have got. It is so in all things. We advance gradually, it is true, but from time to time there is a sudden acceleration, then a slowing down once more. Our next need is perhaps a spiritual rather than a psychic outpouring.

But these are high matters, with which this book is not concerned ; I mention them merely in order that the reader may know that I have thought of them, and have weighed the various objections to psychical research and the opinions to which it generally leads. Psychical science is laying the foundations of a religion which shall be reasonable once more, as Christianity was in its early days, while the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus was given by first-hand witnesses, and before the man-made creeds of the Church began to obscure the spirit of Christ. Objective phenomena are once more proving the reality of a spiritual world and the continued existence therein of human beings whom we have known while in the physical body. There is progression in knowledge and character. All creation seems to be under the guidance of a Mind which we can call good. God is our Father, and we are

in safe hands. This is now a reasonable belief. We do not need to accept it on faith, or to reject it in order to maintain intellectual honesty. It is scientific and rational.

THE END

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